

The background of the cover is a photograph of a natural landscape. In the foreground, two children are seen from behind, standing in a field of tall, dry grass. The child on the left is wearing a blue hoodie and a red and blue baseball cap. The child on the right is wearing a red hoodie and a blue baseball cap. In the middle ground, there are several large, distinctive trees with thick, dark trunks and a dense, spiky canopy of long, thin leaves. The background is filled with more trees and a clear sky.

SOCIAL PLAN

2007 - 2011

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- Individuals and groups who participated in the community meetings and face to face consultations.
- Service providers throughout Gwydir Shire and regional services.
- Councillors and staff of the Gwydir Shire Council.

Suzanne Webber
Community Social Planner
29th October 2006

GWYDIR SHIRE COUNCIL'S VISION STATEMENT

VISION

To be the recognised leader in Local Government through continuous learning and sustainability

MISSION

To ensure that the Council's long term role is viable and sustainable by meeting the needs of our residents in a responsible caring way, attract sustainable development while maintaining the traditional rural values, character and culture of our people

COUNCIL'S VALUES

FOR OUR COMMUNITY AND VISITORS:

We will provide a safe, clean and healthy environment in which all people have the opportunity to participate in, and share in the Council's services and facilities.

FOR OUR COMMUNITY COMMITTEES:

We will seek their opinion in relation to the services in which they assist us, offer relevant and timely support, and recognise their valuable contribution.

FOR OUR STAFF:

We will create an atmosphere of team support which encourages frank and honest communication, and the use of common-sense and innovation in a safe and friendly working environment with the aim of efficiency.

FOR OUR COUNCILLORS:

We will treat all Councillors equally and ensure that they are provided with accurate and timely advice and expect that they will treat each other and the staff with due respect.

The Local Government Act, 1993, as amended details a Council's role through a Charter of Responsibilities in Section 8:

- to provide directly or on behalf of other levels of government, after due consultation, adequate, equitable and appropriate services and facilities for the community and to ensure that those services and facilities are managed efficiently and effectively
- to exercise community leadership
- to exercise its functions in a manner that is consistent with and actively promotes the principles of multiculturalism
- to promote and to provide and plan for the needs of children
- to properly manage, develop, protect, restore, enhance and conserve the environment of the area for which it is responsible, in a manner that is consistent with and promotes the principles of ecologically sustainable development (ESD)
- to have regard to the long term and cumulative effects of its decisions
- to bear in mind that it is the custodian and trustee of public assets and to effectively account for and manage the assets for which it is responsible
- to facilitate the involvement of councillors, members of the public, users of facilities and services and council staff in the development, improvement and co-ordination of local government
- to raise funds for local purposes by the fair imposition of rates, charges and fees, by income earned from investments and, when appropriate, by borrowings and grants
- to keep the local community and the State government (and through it, the wider community) informed about its activities
- to ensure that, in the exercise of its regulatory functions, it acts consistently and without bias, particularly where an activity of the council is affected
- to be a responsible employer.

The development and adoption of the Council's Social Plan contributes enormously to achieving the fundamental objectives established under this Charter.

The Charter provides that each Council must take account of the principles of ESD when determining any plan. The conservation of the Shire's eco-system on which life depends is, therefore, fundamental to any plan that purports to have a *social focus*.

The Local Government Act details a definition of the *principles of ESD* as:

Ecologically sustainable development requires the effective integration of economic and environmental considerations in decision-making processes. Ecologically sustainable development can be achieved through the implementation of the following principles and programs:

- (a) the precautionary principle—namely, that if there are threats of serious or irreversible environmental damage, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to prevent environmental degradation.
In the application of the precautionary principle, public and private decisions should be guided by:
 - (i) careful evaluation to avoid, wherever practicable, serious or irreversible damage to the environment, and
 - (ii) an assessment of the risk-weighted consequences of various options,
- (b) inter-generational equity—namely, that the present generation should ensure that the health, diversity and productivity of the environment is maintained or enhanced for the benefit of future generations,
- (c) conservation of biological diversity and ecological integrity—namely, that conservation of biological diversity and ecological integrity should be a fundamental consideration,
- (d) improved valuation, pricing and incentive mechanisms—namely, that environmental factors should be included in the valuation of assets and services, such as:
 - (i) polluter pays—that is, those who generate pollution and waste should bear the cost of containment, avoidance or abatement,
 - (ii) the users of goods and services should pay prices based on the full life cycle of costs of providing goods and services, including the use of natural resources and assets and the ultimate disposal of any waste,
 - (iii) environmental goals, having been established, should be pursued in the most cost effective way, by establishing incentive structures, including market mechanisms, that enable those best placed to maximise benefits or minimise costs to develop their own solutions and responses to environmental problems.

The application of the principles of ESD, in the broadest sense, is designed to move an organisation to a point of being sustainable across the following three key areas: Environmental, Economic and Social. Some people expand Social to include the Cultural and Human Habitat aspects of a society and also see governance as the glue that holds it all together.

Reporting on an organisation's sustainability is often referred to as *Triple Bottom Line* reporting.

Triple bottom line is a vehicle designed to progress the objectives of sustainable development. Because sustainable development involves the simultaneous pursuit of economic prosperity, environmental quality and social equity, organisations that aim for sustainability need to perform not against a single, financial bottom line but against the triple bottom line - economy, society and environment.

It is also true that an organisation, which is not socially or environmentally sustainable in the long term, is unlikely to be financially sustainable in the long term. For example any Council that cannot meet its community's social needs will quickly lose the support of its community.

Triple Bottom Line can be viewed as both a reporting device (eg. information presented in annual reports) and/or an approach to decision making (eg. the use of decision making and reporting tools to present the economic, environmental and social implications of decisions).

Triple bottom line involves shifts in our organisation's thinking around:

Markets: The sustainable council will have a competitive advantage in the 21st century and sustainability itself will increasingly be delivered by the market

Values: A shift from a focus on the "hard" value of financial results to the "soft" values of integrity, community trust, respect for employees and sustainability.

Transparency: Greater transparency in stakeholder communication is required by organisations which can no longer afford to be closed due to shareholder and public pressure for the "right to know", increased reporting requirements by governments and the risk of involuntary disclosure by the media.

Life cycle: Considerations of life cycle issues will require a shift from *product* to *function* and the inclusion of the impacts and behaviours.

Partnerships: Organisations will need to form new and symbiotic partnerships to help detect change, foresee problems and achieve outcomes.

Time: Most organisations and individuals conceptualise the width of time, that is, more and more demands are made and more events happen in one minute than ever before. Sustainable development requires a consideration of time that is longer as environmental change occurs over a geological time scale.

Governance: The exercise of corporate governance will need to become more inclusive by developing dialogues with a diverse range of stakeholders. Councillors of a sustainable council will devote greater attention to prioritising, monitoring and understanding sustainability issues. In essence, triple bottom line is really the achievement of good governance.

The Council's Social Plan forms an essential component of our movement towards *Triple Bottom Line* reporting.

Gwydir Shire Council will progressively, over the next 12 months, be undertaking a *Sustainability Health Check* as part of the introduction of the Council's overall Sustainability Plan.

This evaluation will examine our organisation across six key areas:

Internally within the Council the organisational culture in respect of:

- **corporate systems:** culture and process
- **strategic planning:** planning with a purpose
- **operations and activities:** smarter practice.

Whilst our performance externally regarding the Council's relationship with its community will also be reviewed in the following areas (and their integration into the organisational culture):

- **leading by example:** inspiration and guidance
- **promoting change:** assistance and education
- **listening and responding:** answering needs.

Council staff address social and cultural issues as part of their reporting process for each matter before the elected Council. The reporting process requires each staff member to review the matter against the following criteria:

SOCIAL FACTORS

Categories	Key Questions
Diversity	Will the proposal address the diverse needs of all sectors of the Gwydir community? Will the proposal facilitate an improvement in access or be accessible to all sectors of community eg disabled access, the elderly etc? What effect will this proposal have on the development of a healthy, equitable, active and involved community within Gwydir Shire?
Amenity	Will the proposal enhance the amenity of public space? Will the proposal enhance and/or be, consistent with the existing urban form?
Public Health and Safety	What effect will the proposal have on the safety of the public environment eg streets, laneways, parks and gardens? What effect will this proposal have on the development of a healthy, equitable, active and involved community within Gwydir Shire?
Cultural and Heritage Values	What effect will this proposal have on the cultural heritage of the urban and other areas within Gwydir Shire? Will the proposal protect, enhance and/or be consistent with built form of heritage value?
Community Services	What effect will the proposal have on the community access to education, leisure, cultural and health services? Will the proposal improve the quality of services available to the community? Will the proposal increase the number and /or variety of services available to the community?

Likewise the other two strands of sustainability are also assessed against the following criteria:

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

Categories	Key Questions
Energy Consumption	<p>What effect will the proposal have on the quantity of energy consumed by Council operations and/or in the Shire?</p> <p>Will the proposal encourage greater levels of energy efficiency?</p> <p>Will the proposal encourage the use of alternative fuel / energy sources eg renewable energy?</p>
Greenhouse Emissions	<p>What effect will the proposal have on the level of greenhouse gas emissions generated by Council activities and/or in the Shire?</p> <p>Will the proposal maximise opportunities to reduce emission levels through the use of lower emission fuels, the use of renewable sources of energy or through carbon sequestration?</p>
Resource Use	<p>Will the proposal delivery methods facilitate a reduction in the quantity of non-renewable or hazardous materials used by the Council and/or the community?</p> <p>Will the proposal delivery methods give preference to materials derived from sustainably managed / renewable sources?</p>
Waste Generation	<p>What effect will the proposal have on the total quantity and type of waste generated by Council activities and/or in the Shire?</p> <p>Will the proposal delivery methods encourage the minimisation of waste?</p> <p>Will the proposal delivery methods facilitate the recovery, reuse and / or recycling of waste materials?</p>
Water Consumption	<p>What effect will the proposal have on the quantity of water consumed and disposed of by the Council and/or in the Shire?</p> <p>Will the proposal encourage greater levels of water efficiency?</p> <p>Will the proposal encourage water recycling?</p> <p>Will the proposal facilitate improvements in water quality?</p>

ECONOMIC FACTORS

Categories	Key Questions
Life Cycle Costs	<p>What ongoing maintenance costs are associated with the proposal?</p> <p>Are the ongoing maintenance costs minimised?</p> <p>Will there be any decommissioning / disposal costs associated with the proposal at its end of its life?</p>
Cost Recovery	<p>Will the proposal provide revenue raising opportunities for the Council?</p> <p>Will the proposal or project delivery methods provide a return on investment?</p>
Shire Assets	<p>Will the proposal protect the value of the Shire's assets?</p> <p>Will the proposal enhance the value of the Shire's assets?</p>
Key Business Sectors	<p>What effect will the proposal have on Gwydir's business community?</p> <p>Will the proposal promote economic growth?</p> <p>Will the proposal encourage additional investment in the local economy?</p>
Infrastructure	<p>What effect will the proposal have on Gwydir's transport infrastructure?</p> <p>What effect will the proposal have on Gwydir's telecommunications infrastructure?</p>

This Social Plan will be a living document to be regularly consulted and reviewed as part of Council's development and implementation of services and management plans which will enable the community to make a real contribution to the ongoing process of social development in this Shire.

1. THE SOCIAL PLAN

1.1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Social Plan is being developed in response to the Local Government (General) Amendment (Community and Social Plans) Regulation 1998 that requires all Councils in New South Wales to develop a Social or Community Plan every five years. Local government is also required to provide an annual summary of activities recording its implementation of the Social Plan within the Access and Equity statement of the Management Plan.

Social planning is considered to be a vital corporate tool to provide Council with a strategic planning framework to guide Council in the provision of appropriate and accessible services and facilities to meet the social needs of people within Gwydir in a fair and equitable manner. It is envisaged that the Social Plan will increase accountability, guide the future development of the community and assist effective partnerships with other Government and non-Government agencies.

The Social Plan is a product of a systemic process that identifies community need, prioritizes actions and develops programs, projects and activities to deliver outcomes that will enhance the well-being of the community.

The requirement for Local Government to develop Social Plans grew out of the 1996 NSW Social Justice directions Statement "Fair Go, Fair Share, Fair Say" which committed the Department of Local Government to ensuring government services are responsive to community needs and diversity.

The regulation is designed to:

- Improve Council's ability to take account of community needs when formulating their management plans;
- Assist Council to provide or advocate for appropriate and accessible services/facilities;
- Increase the community's ability to monitor council's efforts in addressing community needs over time.

The social plan has involved service providers in the community, liaison with government departments and consultation with the community.

1.2 DEVELOPMENT AND DESIGN

The development of the Social plan has been through a consultative process carried out from May 2005 to October 2006. The steps in the process have been:

- Gathering of information from a variety of sources such as the Australian Bureau of Statistics data, other community plans and background papers;
- Consultation with service providers to document current service provision and their needs and priorities;
- Community meetings addressing the needs of older residents, women and children and youth;
- Collation into this document for presentation to Gwydir Shire Council.

- Liaison with representatives of government departments and other community organisations that provide services regionally.

1.3 GOALS OF THE GWYDIR SOCIAL PLAN

The Gwydir Social Plan aims to develop Gwydir as: -

- a community where there are a range of services and activities for all people
- a caring community where people in need are supported by appropriate, adequate and relevant services
- a co-operative community where government and non-government groups work together to identify, prioritise and address community issues
- a creative and culturally stimulating community which is interesting for residents and visitors

1.4 STRATEGY AREAS

The legislation requires that the Social Plan addresses issues for the seven groups listed below. As well we have addressed the issue of Cultural Heritage and the part it plays in the future development of our Shire.

1.4.1 Population Groups

- Children
- Young People
- Women
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People
- Older People
- People with Disabilities
- People from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds

1.4.2 Each Strategy document describes

- the current situation and current facilities and services
- issues and needs
- a set of recommendations for Council's consideration

The following service sectors were seen as relevant for this community plan.

1.4.3 Service Sectors

- Health
- Transport
- Housing
- Education and Training
- Leisure and Recreation
- Employment
- Access
- Safety
- Cultural heritage

2. GWYDIR SHIRE COUNCIL

2.1 SOCIAL SERVICES AND COMMITTEES

Gwydir Shire Council already plays a major role in auspicing and supporting a range of community services and committees in the towns and villages, ensuring that community participation is embraced and encouraged.

These include:

- Libraries
- Preschools & Toy Libraries
- Vacation Care Programs
- Sporting Facilities
- Public Halls
- Neighbourhood Centre
- Centrelink Agency
- Roxy Theatre
- Tourist Information Centres
- HACC Services
- Community Transport
- Community Halls
- Youth Services
- Youth Centre
- Aged care facilities and community housing.
- Bingara Events and Works Committee
- Warialda Works Committee
- Warialda Rivercare Committee
- Aged Services Advisory Committee
- Youth Services Advisory Committee
- Children's Services Advisory Committee
- HACC and Disability Services Advisory Committee
- Gwydir Country Tourism Advisory Committee
- Corporate Strategy and Policy Committee
- Public Infrastructure Committee
- Audit and Performance Committee
- Community Services and Planning Committee
- Community Drug Action Team

2.2 CHALLENGES

The Shire's recent amalgamation has highlighted some unique issues which are apparent in the demographic data for the Shire, and the community consultation undertaken to date. These issues need to be recognised and addressed

- The need for community harmony after amalgamation and the need for a new Shire Identity which encompasses all our towns and villages
- The application of the 'user pays' doctrine in an area with relatively low household incomes and how to make this workable
- The need for an expansion of the available housing stock to accommodate the rental market, new home builders and the possibility of 'lifestyle' choice blocks

(eg Rural Residential)

- The amalgamation of the existing services to gain an economic advantage through 'economies of scale';
- The on-going use of the existing community buildings and recreational facilities to align uses and needs and eliminate duplication or under-utilisation;
- The need to increase peoples awareness of the available services both within this Shire and the surrounding region and to increase the links with services located outside of the towns. This area does not possess all the social capital required to meet its needs, co-operation within the region is imperative; and
- The willingness to evaluate the genuine needs of this Shire and co-operate in a communal manner to meet the defined need

2.3 COMMUNITY HARMONY

Striving for *Community Harmony* must be an objective of every responsible, caring Council. This is especially true of recently amalgamated Councils.

The achievement of *Community Harmony* within a community results from:

- The community sharing a common purpose or vision
- The community having positive social cohesion
- The community having confidence in its public structures; and;
- The community having confidence in its future.

Over the last two decades many smaller rural communities have suffered a reduction in services as the private sector along with State and Federal Governments have 'rationalised' the delivery of its services. These Governments implement change without sufficient explanation to allow any informed understanding to occur. The benefits to the affected communities remain unquantified. However, the loss of services is real.

Additionally State and Federal Governments implement various legal measures that challenge many of the belief structures held within these communities to modify the prevailing mores held within the general community. These issues cover such matters as reconciliation, discrimination and race relations legislation. In many respects, these issues seem irrelevant to areas such as Gwydir where the community is essentially homogenous. There is no doubt that these issues are of major national importance but the government has not established the social context of these decisions that make them relevant to rural communities.

Both of the above changes, along with cost-shifting from both State and Federal Governments onto Local Government, have resulted in a feeling of alienation within these communities and, therefore, add to community disharmony.

Local Government is the third tier of government and has the opportunity to encourage a fundamental change in the perception of government by its residents.

Gwydir Shire Council can promote *Community Harmony* in many ways. For example, the Council can:

- Ensure that its own decision making processes are;

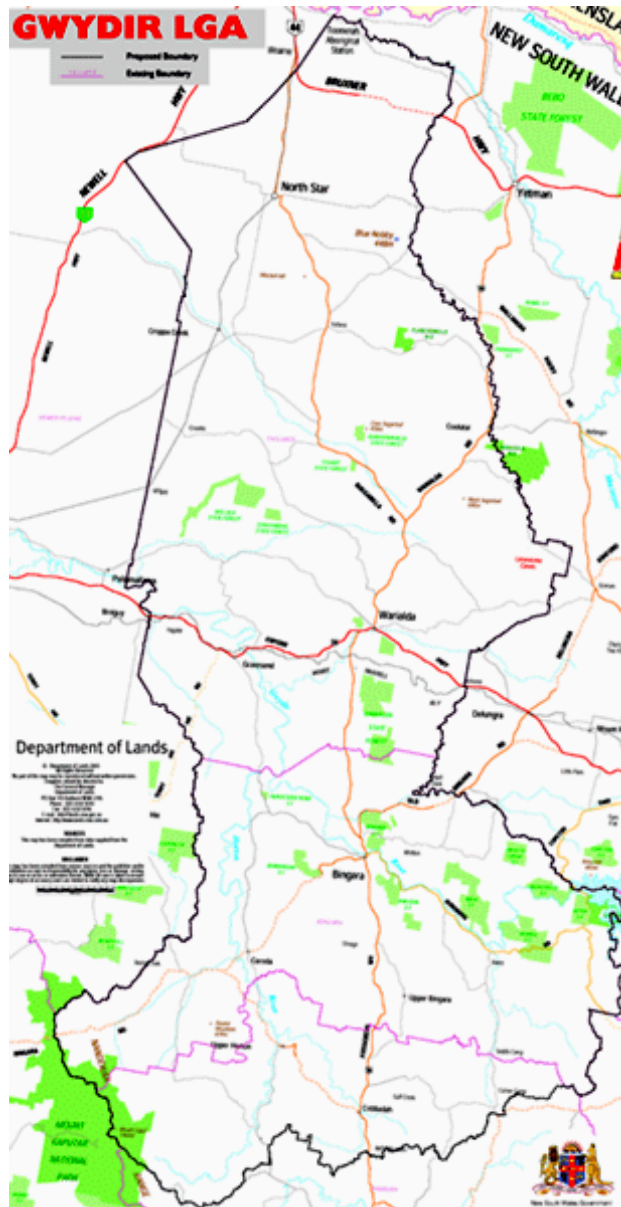
Free from bias
Transparent
Consistent; and;
Conform to the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness.
- Develop and maintain meaningful partnerships with the other levels of government, government agencies and the private sector to fill any service gaps.
- Implement a Social Plan after gaining widespread community support.
- Represent and promote the community's views and opinions to other levels of government on important issues.
- Provide greater certainty in the area of Town Planning using Zoning Requirements and the development of appropriate policies, in order to reduce the potential for conflict between neighbours.
- Provide leadership on important community issues.
- Promote the Council's vision for the future.

This Social Plan is an important component of this Council's commitment to maintain and improve the level of *Community Harmony* within the Gwydir Shire.



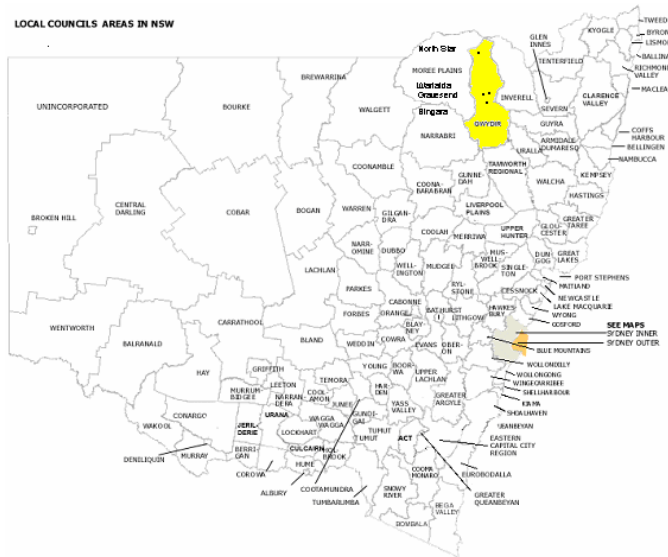
3. GWYDIR PROFILE

GWYDIR SHIRE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA



3.1 INTRODUCTION

Gwydir Shire is located in North West New South Wales within the North West Slopes and Plains region.



The Shire covers an area of 9122 km² and has a population of 5,790 people, according to the 2001 Census. The northern part of the Shire almost touches the NSW/Queensland border, while to the east it is bounded by Inverell, Guyra and Uralla Shires, to the west by Moree Plains and Narrabri Shires and to the south by the Tamworth Regional area.

The centres of population are at Warialda, Bingara, Gravesend, Warialda Rail, North Star, Croppa Creek, Coolatai and Upper Horton.

Both Warialda and Bingara have Hospitals, Aged Care Hostels, Medical Centres, Caravan Parks, Swimming Pools, Preschools, Libraries and Tourist Information Centres.

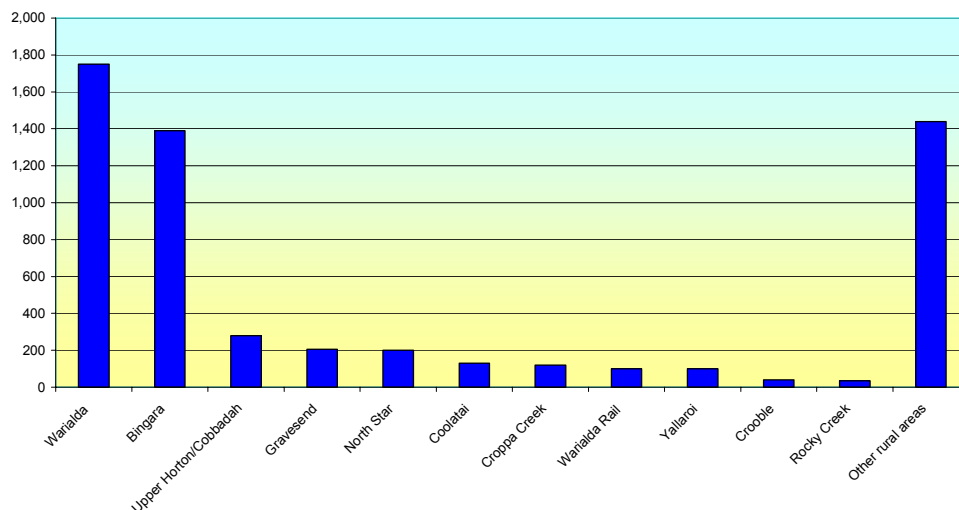
Warialda is the centre for the Council's Technical Services functions.

Bingara is the centre for the Administrative functions.

The two centres are being linked through the use of sophisticated communications equipment to ensure that the amalgamation's primary objective is achieved; to save the existing employment numbers within each of the main urban centres of Warialda and Bingara.

3.2 STATISTICAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW

Gwydir Shire Population Breakdown Total = 5790



This section will give a demographic profile for the Gwydir Shire Council area. This information has been compiled from census data and other data sourced by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

3.2.1 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

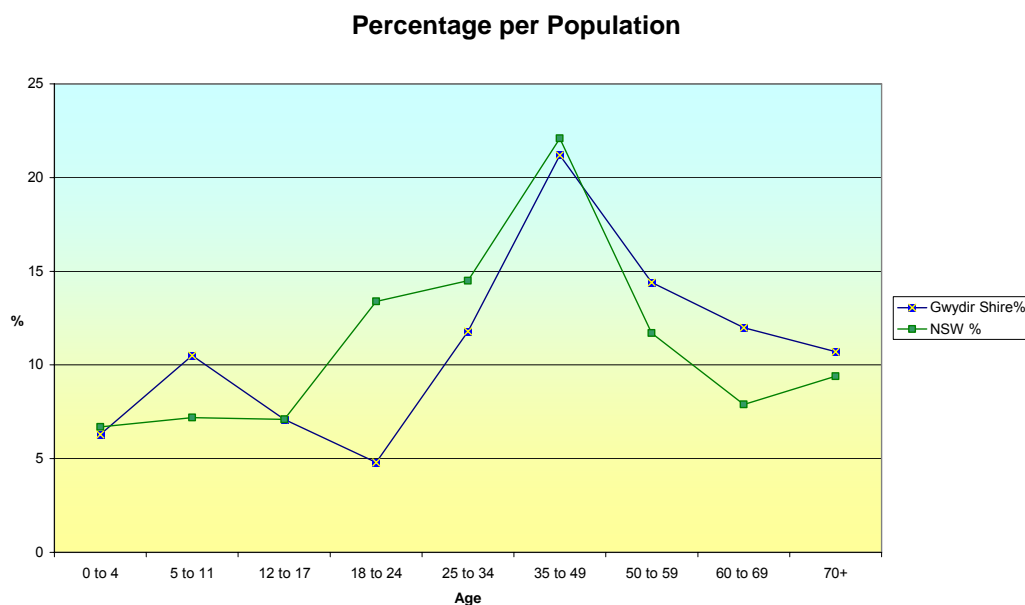
The analysis of the population is based on data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2001 census, as this is the most detailed data available on demographic and social information. Data has also been drawn from Elton Consulting's 2006 Sustainability Profile for Gwydir Shire Council.

3.2.2 POPULATION

The population of each of the towns and settlements of Gwydir Shire is shown in the Table below.

Locality/Community Name	Number of Inhabitants
Warialda	1,750
Bingara	1,390
Upper Horton/Cobbadah	280
Gravesend	205
North Star	200
Coolatai	130
Croppa Creek	120
Warialda Rail	100
Yallaroi	100
Crooble	40
Rocky Creek	35
Other rural areas	1,440
Total (Estimate)	5,790

3.2.3 AGE DISTRIBUTION



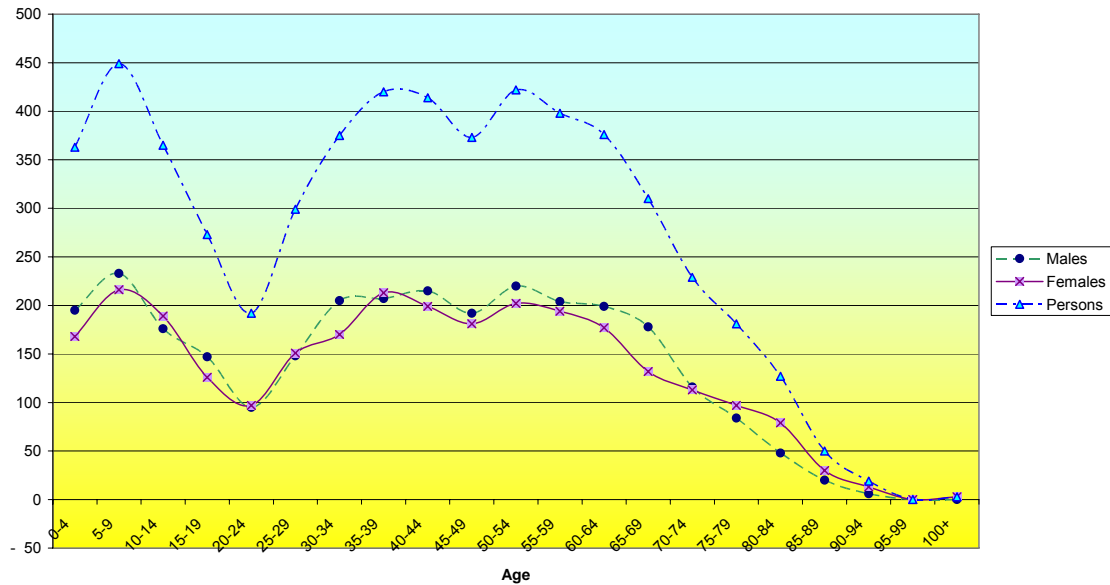
With the advent of amalgamation many changes became evident in relation to social structure in relation to age distribution.

Key findings are:

- In comparison to the NSW average, Gwydir Shire has a relatively high proportion of young children aged 5-11 (10.5%);
- An extremely low relative number of adults aged 18-24 living in the Shire (4.8%) compared to NSW (13.4%);
- A relatively high proportion of emerging retirees (14.4%);
- A high proportion of people aged 60+ (22.7%); and
- A relatively high median age of 41

Age	Gwydir Shire		NSW
Years of Age	Numbers	%	%
0-4	363	6.3	6.7
5-11	600	10.5	7.2
12-17	406	7.1	7.1
18-24	273	4.8	13.4
25-34	674	11.8	14.5
35-49	1,207	21.2	22.1
50-59	820	14.4	11.7
60-69	686	12.0	7.9
70+	609	10.7	9.4
	Median Age	41	35

Age Distribution by Gender



The young children population is significant in numbers and hence young people's activities and programs in the future will be very important for their development.

The lowest point of the age structure is the 18-34 year old cohorts. This pattern is seen in most rural communities where young people have left their towns for education and employment in larger centres.

The proportion of older people will grow as the 50-59 cohort moves through to the older age brackets. Also the migration data shows there are not large movements of older people out of Gwydir Shire, indicating an 'age in place' principle.

The age distribution of the Gwydir population is similar to other rural communities with a general aging of the population. The Australian Bureau of Statistics predicts that by 2019 around 18% of the Australian population is likely to be 65 years and over. This compares to the current National level of around 12%. The Gwydir Shire already has 22.7% of its population over 60 years of age and this proportion will increase in line with national predictions of an aging population.

3.2.4 INCOME LEVELS

Compared with the NSW average, Gwydir Shire had a much higher proportion of population with incomes in the lower and moderate income brackets (less than \$1,499 per week), and conversely a very low proportion in the upper income brackets (above \$1,500 per week)

The median weekly household income was \$680 in 2001, as compared to NSW (\$800-\$999).

Weekly Household Income by Total Households

3.3

Income	Gwydir Shire		NSW
	Numbers	%	%
\$0-\$399	690	31.2	20.7
\$400-\$699	562	25.4	17.7
\$700-\$999	284	12.8	13.0
\$1,000-\$ 1,499	217	9.8	15.7
\$1,500-\$1,999	78	3.5	10.9
\$2,000 or more	55	2.4	10.2
All incomes not stated	324	14.6	11.5
Total	2210	99.7	99.7
Average Weekly Household Income	\$680		\$800-999

EMPLOYMENT STRUCTURE

According to the 2001 ABS data the employment for the respective parts of the newly formed Shire are as follows. In 2001:

The former Yallaroi Shire had a population of 3129 people. Of this population 1292 residents or 41% of the total population, were employed with 70% working in a full time position. The main industry for this Shire was Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing with 46% of the population working in this sector. The next highest level of employment was in Education and Retail Trade, both with 7% of the working population.

The former Bingara Shire had a population of 2061 people. Of this population 716 residents or 35% of the total population, were employed with 64% working in a full time position. The main industry for this Shire was Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing with 39% of the population working in this sector. The next highest level of employment was in the Retail Trade, with 11% of the working population.

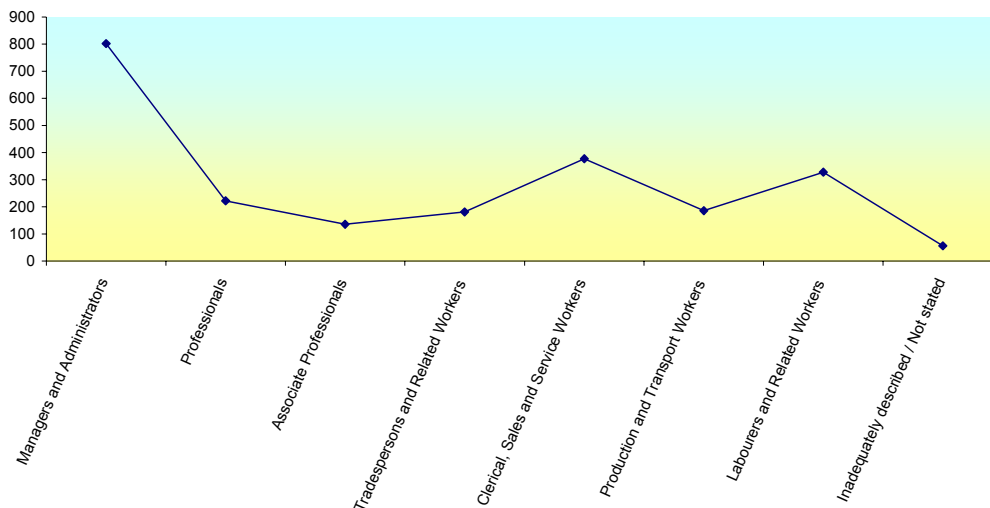
The former Barraba Shire had a population of 2139 people. Of this population 790 residents or 37% of the total population, were employed with 65% working in a full time position. The main industry for this Shire was Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing with the major percentage of the population working in this sector. The next highest level of employment was in the Retail Trade, with 10% of the working population employed. However only 40% of the total shire land mass is now included in the Gwydir Shire. This 40% has a total population of approximately 500 people. The majority of this population is agricultural based.

The Shire has a very high proportion of Managers and Administrators (35%). This figure will include farmers who own and manage their land. Clerical, Sales and

Service Workers are the second largest group with 16.4% of workforce employed in that occupation, but this is relatively low compared to the NSW figure of 30%.

There are relatively few Professionals and Associate Professionals (15.6%), compared to the 30.7% for NSW. There is a high proportion of Labourers and Related Workers (14.3%).

Occupational Analysis



3.3.1 EMPLOYMENT CHANGE

The drought has affected the Gwydir area for the last five years.

Tourism has increased rapidly in Bingara, and in Warialda to a smaller extent.

Warialda is experiencing an increase in light industrial manufacturing.

The whole area is experiencing an increase in property and business services.

Although the primary economic driver will continue to be agricultural production there is an indication manufacturing and tourism will expand during the next decade.

The Council will be promoting a continued increase in the construction industry through the development of more residential, commercial and light industrial sites.

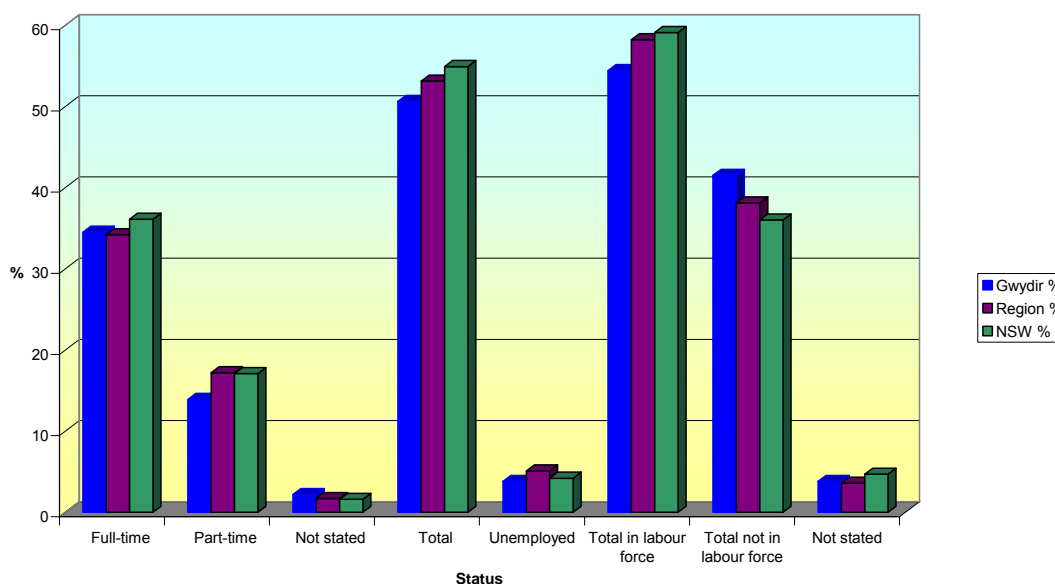
3.3.2 ENTERPRISE STRUCTURE

The agricultural based businesses are mainly owned by family partnerships with a few exceptions. These partnerships may employ people on a regular basis or just as the demand arises.

The retail and tourism businesses are generally operated by the owner and may have a few full time or part time employees. The largest employer in the two bigger townships is the Council, with the supermarkets as the second largest employers.

The goal of the Council is to create opportunities for businesses to expand, set-up or relocate into the Gwydir Shire. It is expected that this would bring about a greater demand for highly skilled personnel and therefore, promote a further influx in population.

Labour Force Breakdown



3.4 EDUCATION RATES

Gwydir differs from the NSW average, having a significantly lower proportion of people with university qualifications and a higher proportion with no qualifications and a relatively high proportion of the population not attending any educational institution.

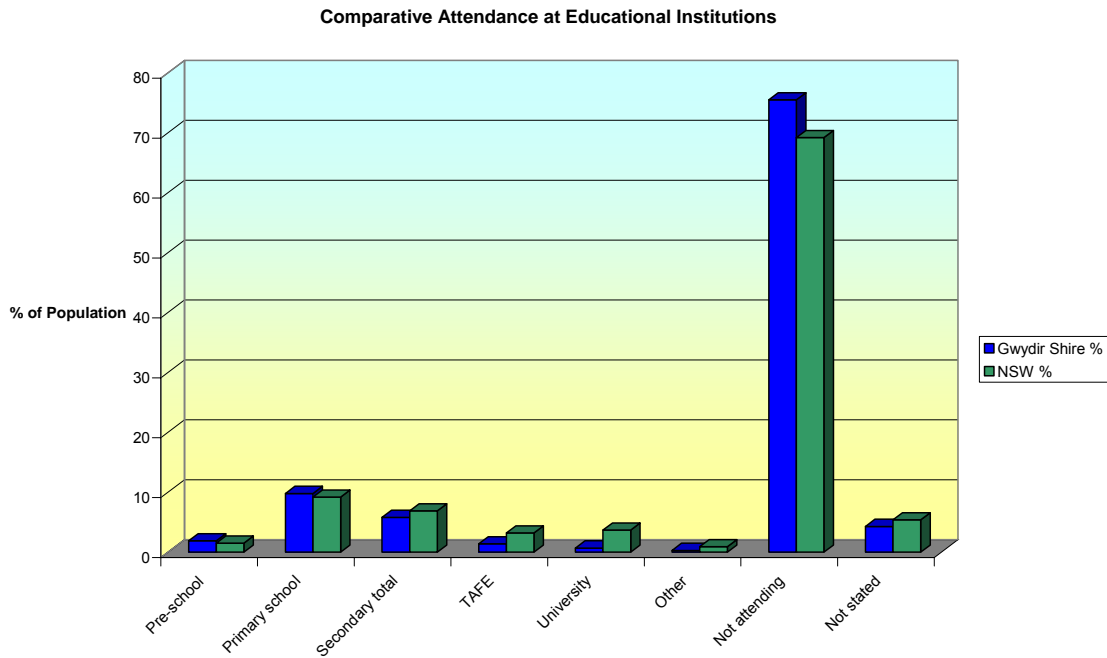
3.4.1 LEVEL OF TERTIARY EDUCATION

	Gwydir Shire		NSW
	Numbers	%	%
Bachelor or higher Degree	269	5.9	13.6
Advanced Diploma and Diploma	181	4.0	6.2
Vocational Certificate	560	12.4	16.4
No qualifications	3006	66.7	51.5
Not stated	487	10.8	12.3
Total	4503	99.8	100

Gwydir Shire residents have a lower level of education than most other communities. This could relate to the age of our residents who were not able to access education and the leaving age for schooling was lower than it is now. Rural communities have tended to have lower levels of education with limited opportunities for further education. They have also been involved in industries that have not required further education.

The Council's participation in the creation of the 'The Gwydir Learning Region' (GLR) to assist in addressing this issue has been exceptionally successful and the aims of this initiative have certainly been achieved. The collaboration of TAFE, University,

Schools, local business and Council has addressed all levels of education across the Shire.



3.5 THE GWYDIR LEARNING REGION

The Council's involvement in the *Gwydir Learning Region* is a significant cornerstone in its Sustainability Strategy for this area and its community.

The direct cost to the Council is relatively minor, (no more than \$20000 in any given year and usually around the \$10000), but the benefits are enormous because it has assisted us to develop a culture of co-operation between the various educational providers that operate within the Shire's boundaries.

The Gwydir Learning Region encourages the broader adult community and focuses on the following desired outcomes:

1. to develop a local skill base to make our community more versatile to meet the work skill mix required within the shire;
2. to build our social networks;
3. to build our community's capacity to be sustainable into the future;
4. to expand our employment and economic opportunity potential;
5. to increase every resident's opportunity to enhance his or her work and life skills
6. to provide individual fulfilment; and
7. to assist those in our community who are excluded from the workplace or are isolated from their community.

The GLR Vision is:

To encourage and assist a cultural change for our region that will occur when each individual fulfils his or her potential through positive social interaction and participation in the community

Gwydir Shire has no formal TAFE or University presence within its boundaries. Therefore, the first step was to enhance and further develop the existing strategic network to expand the program.

The full impact and benefits of the GLR were able to be realised following the amalgamation of Yallaroi and Bingara Shire Councils along with about 40% of the former Barraba Shire Council.

This Council's main role is to provide a *space of engagement* both in the sense of a physical meeting area but also by encouraging the meeting of the minds that creates the synergy to explore new ideas and ways of achieving the social outcomes desired.

The Gwydir Shire Council acts as a full participant in the process and is an 'honest broker' between the GLR participants. The Council's only motivation is seeking a positive outcome for the community that it serves.

Trust is the prerequisite to blurring the boundaries of the structural silos that work against active engagement between service providers. The Council actively facilitates the 'cross-silo' communication required to achieve the desired outcomes.

The Gwydir Learning Region Committee is a Committee of the Council. It acts as the catalyst for cooperation.

Conceptually the process is summarised on the following slide from a recent presentation:



At a surface level, the Gwydir Learning Region is an example of what public and private organisations and committed individuals can achieve through goodwill,

passion and determination in an economically depressed, socially disadvantaged and remote area of NSW.

At a deeper level, as highlighted in the recent independent review of the GLR by Dr John Mitchell's Report, sophisticated concepts underpin the Gwydir Learning Region, including concepts of innovation and collective creativity, lifelong learning, personalised learning, learning communities, inclusive leadership, social capital, social harmony, social infrastructure, social justice, ecological community development and sustainable rural development.

The Gwydir Learning Region aims to be recognised as a "model region for learning" that has enriched the lives, well-being and prosperity of its communities, making it an attractive region to live in and enabling the region to thrive in the global economy. The GLR enables individuals and communities to regain control of their futures, to build confidence and maintain a sense of pride and achievement.

Across the Shire this is evidenced by the desire of individual communities to 'create' their future through the development of forward plans. These include:

- **The Gravesend Community Program;**
- **The North Star Shines Program;**
- **The Cultivate Coolatai Program;**
- **The Crooble Community Program;**
- **The Grow Croppa Creek Program;**
- **The U-Beauty Upper Horton Program;**
- **The Warialda Works Program; and**
- **The Bingara Vision 20/20 Plan.**

The GLR has allowed these communities to believe that they can influence their future.

The 'can-do' approach of the GLR's participants allows the synergy of co-operative effort to assist each community to achieve its goals.

The all-important dialogue between the community, businesses and the educational providers creates opportunities to broker suitable courses irrespective of the provider.

The extensive educational opportunities that are provided for the students of the GLR are based on the notion of meeting the individual needs of the student where a student is anyone of any age who wants to better themselves through education. It could be a student wanting to proceed to a trade or university or a local business wanting to improve its operations.

The towns of Bingara and Warialda have the largest number of school based trainees (50) in the northwest region and they work in a range of employment including Retail, Childcare, Hospitality, Primary Industry, Mechanics, Business and Information Technology. The local businesses are strong advocates for the trainees and the vocational education program. They support the traineeships through their mentoring on the job and involvement in the Gwydir Industry and Education Links Committee (GIELC).

In addition the schools now have some 80 adult learners undertaking VocEd courses. By enrolling the adults into the school based VocEd programs the cost of the courses is met by the Board of Vocational Education.

What the GLR is finding is that once the adults complete their first TAFE Course they are then re-enrolling at their cost for subsequent courses. The GLR co-ordinates the delivery of these courses and assist the keener learners with the development of the pathways required to go on to further study. The types of courses being offered are very much focused on addressing any skill deficiencies that exist. For example the GLR has facilitated the running of Certificate 111 courses in Aged Care Nursing and Children's Services, both areas of need within our community.

In 2007 the 'School Based Apprenticeship' scheme will commence. This Council is about to become a Group Training Organisation, which will allow us to take on apprentices whilst they are still at school. It is our intention to seek an alliance with organisations such as Country Energy to offer the on-site training required with the educational training occurring locally. These high need area (electricians, plumbers, builders, etc) apprenticeships are required to address the current skill deficiencies that exist within Gwydir.

The culture of co-operation has allowed the Council with the assistance of our partners to undertake some other interesting initiatives that are not solely based upon the development of vocational skills although some still have this outcome as a pleasant by-product.

For example the Council, Warialda High School and New England TAFE have opened a gymnasium to assist our community to become healthier. This initiative is supported by the local General Practitioners and is proving to be financially viable. To support the gymnasium TAFE are running a Certificate 111 Course in Fitness through the High School.

Another example is the Heavy Plant and Truck Operators' School that is being developed with TAFE Moree for operation at Warialda. The Council's input is the land and training some of our current plant operators up to Certificate IV in Training and Assessment. TAFE will be providing the bunkhouse accommodation infrastructure, course outlines, administrative support (advertising, enrolments, etc) and Heavy Plant and Trucks. This also allows our existing competent plant operators some teaching experience to enhance their skill base. These employees are often called upon to train others within our workforce but their skills went largely unrecognized.

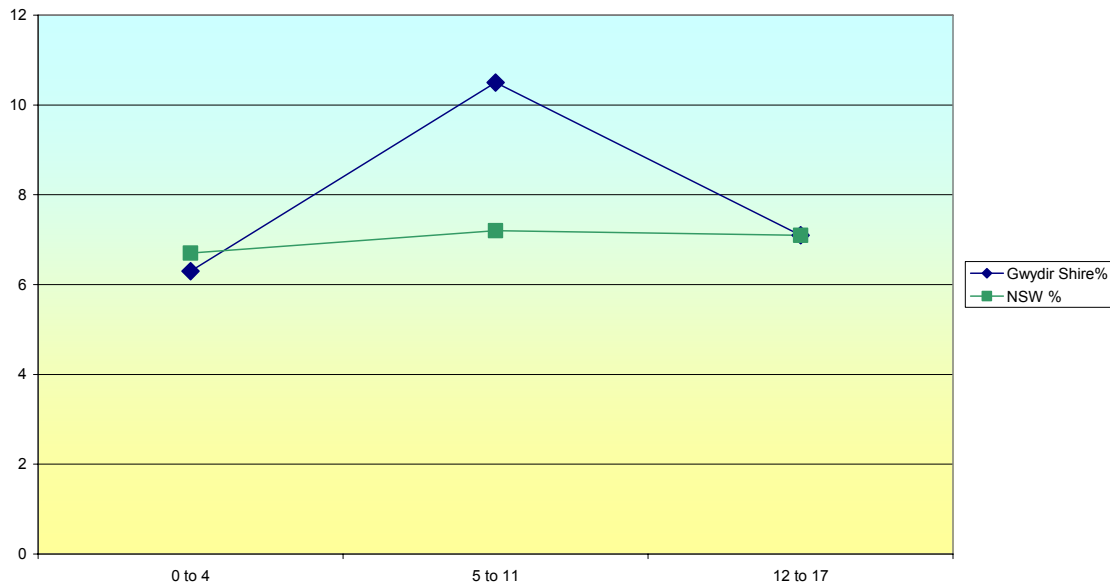
Gwydir Shire Council's Vision is, ***to be the recognised leader in Local Government through continuous learning and sustainability.*** Our involvement in the Gwydir Learning Region is an important component of our corporate life because we believe in our Vision and Mission to enhance the community that we serve.

4. IDENTIFICATION OF NEEDS _____



4.1 CHILDREN

Children Living in Gwydir Shire



Children aged 12 years of age and under account for 16.8% of Gwydir's population. Currently the Gwydir Shire Council has a number of Children's Services including a variety of Preschool services, two Toy Libraries and Vacation Care Programs as well as an Early Intervention Family Worker who caters for children aged 0-5 and their families.

The Council's Charter under the Local Government Act specifically requires each council *to promote and to provide and plan for the needs of children.*



4.1.1 STRATEGY FOR CHILDREN

Facilities	Issues and Gaps	Action Required
<p>Bingara Preschool An early childhood facility For children aged 2-5 years (limited places for 2 year olds) Operates 8.45 a.m. -3.45p.m. four days per week in school terms.</p> <p>Tharawonga Mobile Preschool An early childhood facility for children aged 2-5 years which service the shire villages on a regular but part-time basis. The villages included in this mobile catchment are: North Star, Yallaro, Crooble & Croppa Creek.</p>	<p>Limited places for 2 year olds and no places for children aged 0-2 years.</p> <p>Some financial assistance for low income families but fees may preclude some families from using the service.</p> <p>The Tharawonga Mobile Children's service is a very important one in relation to ensuring that all families in the Shire have access to good quality early childhood education. Extra funding has been received from FACSIA this financial year. Work is almost complete on new building but this is not ideal as far as storage space is concerned and extra funding will need to be sought in the future.</p>	<p>Conduct regular surveys to monitor demand for childcare in Bingara.</p> <p>Investigate other models of Rural Childcare Centres which incorporate Long Day Care, Out of School Hours Care. Investigate Commonwealth funding.</p> <p>Communication with the mobile unit is essential and broad band or fast internet needs to be connected. Investigate internet options. Investigate other sources of funding for building maintenance.</p>
<p>Gwydir Vacation Care Program Offers a recreational program for children aged 5-12 years of age. One week of activities in three separate locations is planned each school holiday period. Based in the Youth Centre in Bingara, the Community Hall in Gravesend and the Town Hall in Warialda</p> <p>Hours 9.00 a.m. – 3.00.p.m.</p>	<p>Good numbers attending as there is no cost to families at this stage to attract low income families who now appear to be main users of the program. This increased usage of the service indicated that money was an issue for many parents looking for childcare in the school holidays. The program is only run for one week of the year in each community and needs to be extended into the smaller towns and villages in addition to the existing service in Warialda and Bingara.</p>	<p>Investigate establishing an Out of School Hours Care Centre incorporating before and after school care and holiday programs.</p> <p>Register the current program as a registered childcare service so that fees can be charged and parents can claim back some of the fees paid.</p> <p>Regularly seek feedback from parents and children re the Program so that it can continue to improve. Investigate the commencement of an activity based vacation program (golf, tennis, squash, etc) on a 'user pays' basis to encourage broader participation in recreation.</p> <p>Promote physical activities that can be included in the program to address childhood obesity issues</p>

STRATEGY FOR CHILDREN CONT'D.....

Facilities	Issues and Gaps	Action Required
<p>Council Playgrounds Gwydir Park Cunningham Park Apex Park Captain Cook Park Hospital Park Cranky Rock Reserve (Playground area). Gravesend Park North Star Community Park Croppa Creek Park Upper Horton Showground (Playground area)</p>	<p>Most of the equipment complies with Safety Standards however, some of the equipment does not comply with these standards.</p> <p>Soft-fall areas and shade protection needs to be improved.</p> <p>Some equipment in Northern end of Shire needs to be replaced</p>	<p>Regular maintenance to be completed and a complaint process for residents regarding the playground equipment.</p> <p>Some funding needs to be allocated for the soft fall and shade protection requirements.</p> <p>Seek Sport & Rec funding for equipment costs</p>
<p>Early Intervention Family Worker and Play groups The Early Intervention Family Worker is funded by the Department of Community Services and runs playgroups in Bingara, Warialda and Gravesend, for small children or babies. Each group meets one day per week.</p> <p>This is encouraging educational play and provides parenting assistance and support from others in the group as well as visiting specialists.</p>	<p>Not affiliated with the Playgroup Association.</p> <p>Numbers attending varies throughout the year.</p> <p>Some parents would like more structured activities for their children.</p> <p>Potentially seen as transition to Preschool.</p> <p>Wet weather proves to be difficult as no area is available and the group is cancelled.</p> <p>Unsuitable Office Space.</p>	<p>Continue to support the current play groups. Costs need to be kept low to attract low income earners to the sessions.</p> <p>Look at changing Bingara venue to accommodate in wet and dry weather.</p> <p>Seek funding from FRRR to improve site for playgroup.</p> <p>Look at Early Intervention Worker being located in Toy Library to increase access and visibility of service.</p>
<p>Toy Libraries Toys and educational resources for children aged 0- 6 years of age. An annual membership fee per family.</p> <p>The Bingara Library is open 9.00 a.m. – 12.30 p.m. Tues and Thurs</p> <p>The Warialda Library is open 1.00pm - 5.00pm Tues and 10.00am - 2.00pm Fri</p> <p>Resources are utilised by Pre-school and Vacation Care program as well as hospital day care and other community groups.</p>	<p>Limited opening hours due to staff costs.</p> <p>Both the Bingara and Warialda service are located in a main street shop to increase profile of the Toy Library. It may be more beneficial to locate the Early Intervention Family Service within the Toy Libraries to provide better access to referral and advocacy services.</p>	<p>Investigate more suitable locations for the Toy Library with co-location with other Services which could allow staff costs to be shared between programs and longer opening hours.</p> <p>Other benefits would include increased interaction between families using the Toy Library and older residents which may develop supportive relationships.</p> <p>Set up parent room in Warialda and expand video and DVD collections.</p>

STRATEGY FOR CHILDREN CONT'D.....

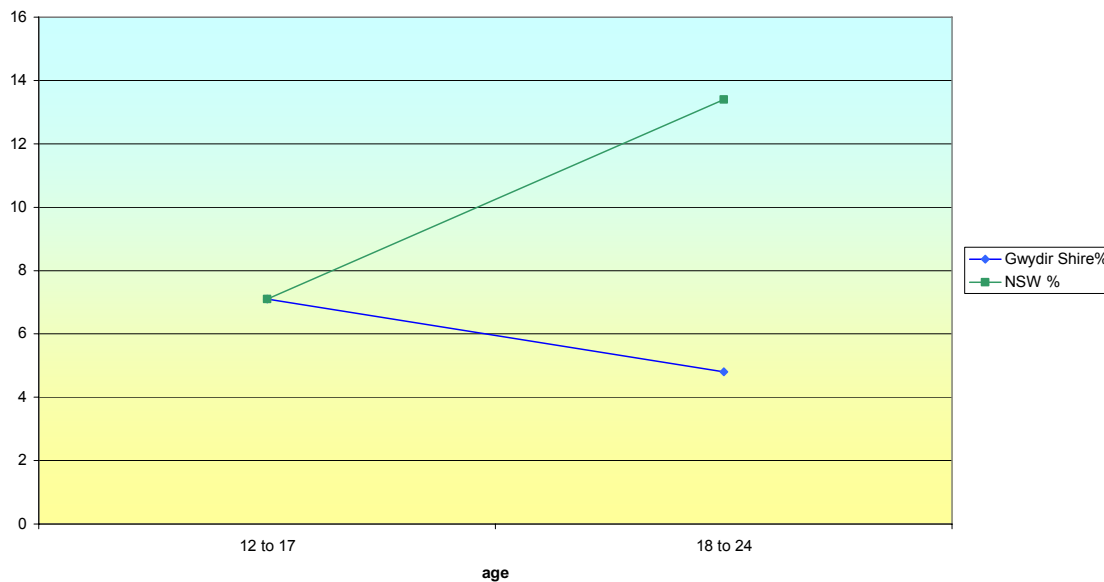
Facilities	Issues and Gaps	Action Required
<p>NSW Department of Sport and Recreation. Closest office is Tamworth with staff available to coordinate sports coaching clinics. Learn to swim classes with an Auswim accredited teacher are offered at both Bingara and Warialda pools.</p>	<p>Courses attract a cost and need 10-15 participants to be run. Costs may be too high for local families.</p> <p>Better local promotion and coordination of the Sport and Recreation program is needed.</p>	<p>The Council may need to work with surrounding towns to have the numbers to run sports clinics. Access for the smaller villages needs to be addressed this can be achieved by use of the community buses.</p> <p>Council needs to employ an appropriately qualified person to encourage and co-ordinate the more structured use of its recreational facilities.</p>
<p>Swimming Pools: Bingara Six lane 33 metre pool and a baby pool open from October to March each year. Warialda Six lane 50 metre pool and a baby pool open from October to March each year.</p>	<p>Local swimming club runs coaching clinics and swimming lessons to club members.</p> <p>Pool needs maintenance and more attractive surroundings</p> <p>Lack of forward provision for replacement and expensive repairs.</p>	<p>Succession planning needs to be implemented so that staff are supported and replaced when required.</p> <p>Better quality kitchen facilities are required to raise the income of the pool.</p> <p>The current volunteer effort at both complexes must be acknowledged.</p> <p>Investigate the creation of an appropriate restricted reserve.</p>
<p>Sporting Ovals and Facilities: Bingara Gwydir Oval. Other sporting facilities are located at the Bingara Sporting Club (tennis, bowls and golf). The Civic Centre is used for basketball. The Bingara Central School oval is also used on weekends for cricket. The School Hall is used for Tae Kwon Do Warialda Football grounds along with a Squash Centre located on the main street, tennis courts and indoor sports complex as well as the Golf & Bowling Club.</p>	<p>Limited range of sports available in the town, some families travel to Inverell to be involved in Soccer, Hockey or Netball.</p> <p>Lack of on-going maintenance of the Tennis Courts located at the Bingara Sporting Club creates a poor impression of the town's sporting facilities to the visitor.</p>	<p>Develop a recreation or physical activity plan that includes the needs of children.</p> <p>Encourage the Bingara Sporting Club to better maintain the tennis courts all year round</p> <p>Develop a central listing of sporting clubs and contacts for people wanting to take up a sport.</p> <p>Council needs to employ an appropriately qualified person to encourage and co-ordinate the more structured use of its recreational facilities.</p>

STRATEGY FOR CHILDREN CONT'D.....

Facilities	Issues and Gaps	Action Required
<p>Barwon Blue Light Disco Inc. A community group supported by the local police officers who run drug and alcohol free discos for young people aged 0-18 years of age.</p> <p>Operates within Bingara, Warialda and Gravesend.</p>	<p>Reliant on community support through a local committee and supervisors at the discos. This organisation benefits greatly from council employees being on the committee and the donation of equipment by the council.</p>	<p>The current volunteer effort must be acknowledged.</p> <p>Continuing free use of Council's facilities.</p>
<p>Schools</p> <p>Croppa Creek Public School North Star Public School Gravesend Public School Warialda Public School Bingara Central School St Patrick's Catholic Primary School Warialda</p> <p>Schools are in receipt of Country Areas Program (CAP) funding which aims to close the gap of isolation through many of its programs.</p>	<p>The CAP funding is due for review following the release of the most recent Census Data. There is a possibility that the CAP funding may be removed from some schools within the Shire.</p> <p>Continuing CAP funding allows some of the GLR initiatives to be funded through the schools.</p>	<p>Council to monitor any suggested alteration to the CAP funding and make the strongest representation possible if any proposal to remove any funding is mooted.</p>
<p>Cultural Activities</p> <p>Gwydir Learning Region Band. Warialda High School co-ordinates the GLR Band that contains representatives from schools across the Shire.</p> <p>Both Warialda High School and Bingara Central School each has its own band.</p>	<p>Cost of instruments, travelling and lack of skilled tutors especially for the 'beginner band'</p>	<p>Council to continue its support for the GLR Band and school based programs.</p>

4.2 YOUTH

Young People in Gwydir Shire



The young people (12-24 year olds) account for 11.9% of the Gwydir Shire population. Many young people leave the area for training or employment. Gwydir Shire, like other rural communities, needs to consider ways of supporting young people to stay on in rural towns or if they leave, to encourage them back after they have completed training in larger centres.



4.2.1 STRATEGY FOR YOUTH

FACILITIES AND SERVICES	ISSUES AND GAPS	ACTION REQUIRED
<p>Gwydir Youth Service NSW Department of Community Services funds the Shire for a Youth Service two days a week. The council pays the gap for a full time position.</p>	<p>Distance and travel are the main issues. It is difficult to make sure that the whole Shire is covered. Most work is achieved by accessing young people in a school setting as the Warialda High School is a main catchment area for the Shire's Youth.</p> <p>The major role of the Youth Worker is to support children, young people, individuals and families to enhance their independence, safety, self esteem and /or quality of life within and as part of the community</p>	<p>A Youth Council needs to be established and supported by Council so that all towns and villages are involved and their young people are represented.</p> <p>The Mayor for a day program needs to be explored and other forms of interaction with young people needs to be encouraged.</p>
<p>Bingara Neighbourhood Centre / Centrelink Agency Information is available on services and Centrelink benefits. Referrals can be made to other services. Operates Mon- Fri 9.00 a.m.-5.00 p.m.</p>	<p>The Neighbourhood Centre is not used regularly by young people. The Service hours are not suitable for school students.</p> <p>The Neighborhood Centre was developed with the objective of building a strong community with social capital while undertaking community development, so that the community is well informed, resourced and connected as well as embracing equity and diversity. This is not yet being achieved to its full potential</p>	<p>The Neighbourhood Centre is an ideal venue for a homework centre and funding should be sought to extend the operating hours to allow young people to access the service.</p> <p>A Trainee position could be established to facilitate this outcome and needs further investigation.</p>
<p>Barwon Blue Light Disco Inc. A community group supported by the local police officers who run drug and alcohol free discos for young people aged 0-18 years of age.</p>	<p>Reliant on community support through a local committee and supervisors at the discos. This organisation benefits greatly from council employees being on the committee and the donation of equipment by the council.</p>	<p>The current volunteer effort must be acknowledged.</p> <p>Continuing free use of Council's facilities.</p>
<p>Youth Week Program Funding is made available each year through the State Government for a week of events in Gwydir Shire.</p>	<p>Transport is a major obstacle as the cost is very high however funding is available through MAA specifically for youth week transport.</p> <p>Heavily reliant on funding</p>	<p>This program needs ongoing Council Support</p> <p>Investigate all possibilities for holding events in all towns and villages</p>
<p>WOW Fitness - Gym Operates in Warialda on a part time basis and is an initiative of the Gwydir Learning Region</p>	<p>Staffing levels are reliant on those with relevant qualifications.</p> <p>Only open before and after school hours for short periods of time making it difficult to maximise its viability</p>	<p>Investigate succession planning and ensure that others are gaining qualifications to be able to open longer and more frequently. Employment of suitably qualified staff.</p>

STRATEGY FOR YOUTH CONT'D.....

FACILITIES AND SERVICES	ISSUES AND GAPS	ACTION REQUIRED
<p>Sporting Ovals and Facilities: Bingara Gwydir Oval Sporting Club (tennis, bowls and golf). The Civic Centre is used for basketball. The Bingara Central School oval is also used on weekends for cricket. The School Hall is used for Tae Kwon Do.</p> <p>Warialda Squash Centre located on the main street. Tennis courts and indoor sports complex. Warialda Skate Park Golf & Bowling Club, Pony Club, CTC</p>	<p>Youth involved in organised sports such as Cricket and Rugby League use Gwydir Oval and school facilities. There is a limited range of sports available in the shire with travel to Inverell being necessary for sports such as Netball and Soccer. Young people's involvement in organised sports decreases from Primary school age. Young people have stated that they would like to see Skate Park in Bingara and Bike tracks provided in Warialda.</p> <p>Future potential expanded recreational use of the Civic Centre</p> <p>Lack of interest in Skate park in Warialda - novelty has worn off</p> <p>CTC- Community Technology Centre This centre is well patronised but has difficulty staying financial. The committee needs support and funds to continue. The CTC houses the Centrelink agency and this means that there is a constant income.</p>	<p>Council to work with local young people to access funding for recreational facilities for young people.</p> <p>A recent survey of young people in Bingara indicated that the main sporting venue they would like to see in Bingara was a skate Park so if the equipment from Warialda, being transportable was shared with Bingara the expense of a new park would not be necessary it could then be transported elsewhere in the Shire on a regular basis including Gravesend and possibly North Star</p> <p>The exchange of Skate park equipment from Warialda to Bingara is reliant on cement slab so funding needs to be sought from Sport and Recreation, Council or local Service Clubs</p> <p>Council to investigate the possibility of becoming the auspicing body for the CTC and take a more active role in ensuring its sustainability. The CTC could operate as a type of neighbourhood centre in Warialda and be able to offer more than just access to technology which in itself is an extremely important issue in our shire.</p>
<p>Cultural Activities</p> <p>Gwydir Learning Region Band. Warialda High School co-ordinates the GLR Band that contains representatives from schools across the Shire.</p> <p>Both Warialda High School and Bingara Central School each has its own band.</p>	<p>Cost of instruments, travelling and lack of skilled tutors especially for the 'beginner band'</p>	<p>Council to continue its support for the GLR Band and school based programs.</p>

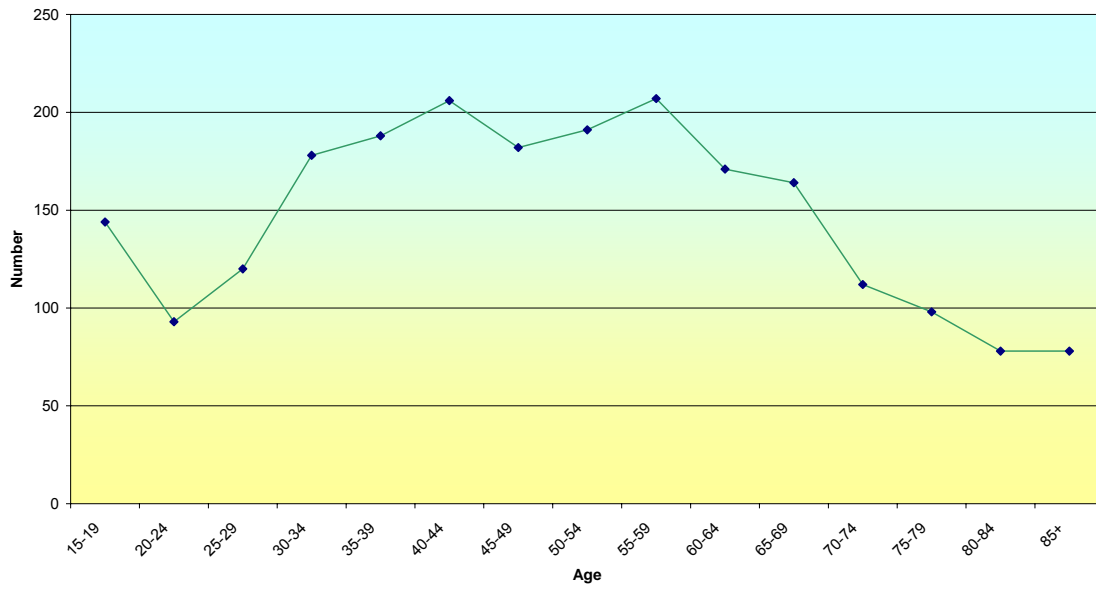
STRATEGY FOR YOUTH CONT'D.....

FACILITIES AND SERVICES	ISSUES AND GAPS	ACTION REQUIRED
<p>Schooling Bingara Central School offers K-Year 10. Students wishing to complete the HSC travel to Warialda High School for Year 11 and 12 as do students from Gravesend and other villages. Both schools have a wide range of vocational courses available with some classes being offered outside normal school hours. Other young people leave the district to attend Boarding school or seek private board.</p>	<p>Those students that attend Warialda High School considered that more could be done to form social links with Warialda school students prior to commencing at the school.</p> <p>Investigation continues for Year 11 and 12 to be offered at Bingara Central School.</p>	<p>Liaise with the two schools and promote social links by inviting Warialda to events.</p> <p>Promote Gwydir Learning Region</p> <p>Promote a solution supported by the community and the best outcome for each child.</p>
<p>Youth Exchange Program – Willoughby Council As part of the Orange Festival celebrations Council supports a program where young people from Willoughby stay with local families and Young people from Bingara travel to Sydney. This is a Friendly City partnership.</p>	<p>Education as to how life works in the City and understanding of different cultural groups.</p>	<p>Ongoing Council support of the program</p> <p>Investigate the possibility of developing overseas' exchange programs with suitable hosts in Greece or Japan.</p>
<p>Community Drug Action Team This program was started in Warialda as an early intervention strategy and has grown to encompass the whole Shire with a focus on drug and alcohol education through the Youth Service providing first aid training, <i>Save A Mate</i>, which is relevant to young people.</p>	<p>Limited funding available but accessible.</p> <p>More wholehearted support Bingara Central School is essential.</p> <p>Community awareness of the programs running is limited.</p> <p>Community involvement is low.</p>	<p>Council to continue to auspice funds that are made available to the Youth service for running (SAM) programs.</p> <p>Develop a committee of council to support drug and alcohol education.</p> <p>Better engage community in education program</p>



4.3 WOMEN

Women Living in Gwydir Shire in 2005



Total women living in Gwydir Shire = 2210



4.3.1 STRATEGY FOR WOMEN

FACILITIES AND SERVICES	ISSUES AND GAPS	ACTION REQUIRED
<p>HEALTH Hunter New England Health Service Women's Health Clinic A women's Health Nurse visits from Moree and conducts clinics at both community Health Centres.</p> <p>Hunter New England Community Health Service Full time community nurses based at Bingara and Warialda with visiting specialist services such as Asthma and Diabetes educators. Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol counsellors visit on a fortnightly basis when the position is filled.</p>	<p>Service not well known in the community and consequently not utilised by as many women as would be expected to.</p> <p>The Community Health Centre is open in the morning only and women need to make appointments through the hospital.</p> <p>Not being utilised well as general local community not aware of services and often the position is vacant for long periods of time.</p>	<p>Better publicity of the service through community directory</p> <p>Ongoing maintenance and updating of community directory, possibly separating it from the business directory</p> <p>Community directory and better publicity of visiting services</p> <p>Support for Multi Purpose Service in both Warialda and Bingara to encompass all areas of health care and look for funding to continue healthy lifestyles program.</p>
<p>WOW Fitness - Gym Operates in Warialda on a part time basis and is an initiative of the Gwydir Learning Region</p>	<p>Staffing levels are reliant on those with relevant qualifications.</p> <p>Only open before and after school hours for short periods of time making it difficult to maximise its viability</p>	<p>Investigate succession planning and ensure that others are gaining qualifications to be able to open longer and more frequently</p> <p>Look at incorporating child care and mini gym into business plan</p>
<p>Medical Centres Bingara General Practice clinic operates from a Council owned Medical Centre with 2-3 doctors practicing. One female doctor with an interest in Women's Health.</p> <p>Warialda Medical centre is privately owned and operated. Council is proposing to financially assist with the upgrading of the centre and assume ownership.</p> <p>The Shire's residents are bulk billed.</p>	<p>Service supported financially by Gwydir Shire Council.</p> <p>None of the smaller villages have a local centre so travel is necessary and may be difficult for low income earners</p> <p>Ensure that work is completed within the time constraints for better service delivery</p>	<p>Bulk billing arrangements to continue for Shire residents.</p> <p>Liaison between both Medical centres and community services as well as Hunter New England Health Service Women's Health Nurse to promote importance of regular health checks and ensure women have choice of service.</p> <p>Ensure that community services promote Hunter New England Health Primary Health Care Network and make referrals</p>

STRATEGY FOR WOMEN CONT'D.....

Facilities	Issues and Gaps	Action Required
<p>Breast screen NSW Mammography service visits towns annually. Free mammograms for women aged 50 years and over.</p>		<p>Support visits to Shire by advertising visits and displaying posters or other health promotion information</p>
<p>Childcare Services Bingara Pre-school operates in school periods and school hours. Chiefly for children aged 3-5 years. Subsidised places are available for low income families.</p> <p>Tharawonga Mobile Preschool An early childhood facility for children aged 2-5 years which service the Shire villages on a regular but part-time basis. The villages included in this mobile catchment are: North Star, Yallaroi, Crooble and Croppa Creek.</p> <p>Gwydir Vacation Care Program Operates 9.00 a.m. -3.00 p.m. for one week each school holiday period.</p> <p>Inverell and District Family Day Care Service has 1 home based carer in Bingara and 2 in Warialda</p>	<p>There is an unmet need for childcare for children aged 0-2 years and for care outside of school hours for all ages.</p> <p>Work is almost complete on new building but this is not ideal as far as storage space is concerned and extra funding will need to be sought in the future.</p> <p>Family Support Worker needs assistance with Playgroups for the Northern end of Shire as far as ideas and scope for expansion of the service</p> <p>Not aware of the council Birth Certificate program</p> <p>Service operates from youth centre in Bingara and Town Hall in Warialda attracting younger children. Costs need to be reviewed to be comparable to other childcare services.</p> <p>Still unmet demand for home based care in the Shire, more carers required.</p>	<p>Monitor demand for childcare in Bingara through regular childcare surveys. Investigate funding opportunities for Multi-purpose Childcare Centres which incorporate Long Day care and Out of School Hours Care.</p> <p>Communication with the mobile unit is essential and broad band or fast internet needs to be connected. Investigate internet options. Investigate other sources of funding for building maintenance.</p> <p>Better communication with the Family Support Worker so that fresh ideas can be tried and improvements made to attendance and education sessions</p> <p>Review costs and register Service so as parents can claim costs. Survey parents regarding program satisfaction</p> <p>Liaise with this Service to ensure that it does not compete with local Pre-school</p> <p>Investigate establishing an Out of School Hours Care Centre incorporating before and after school care and holiday programs as well as long day care</p>

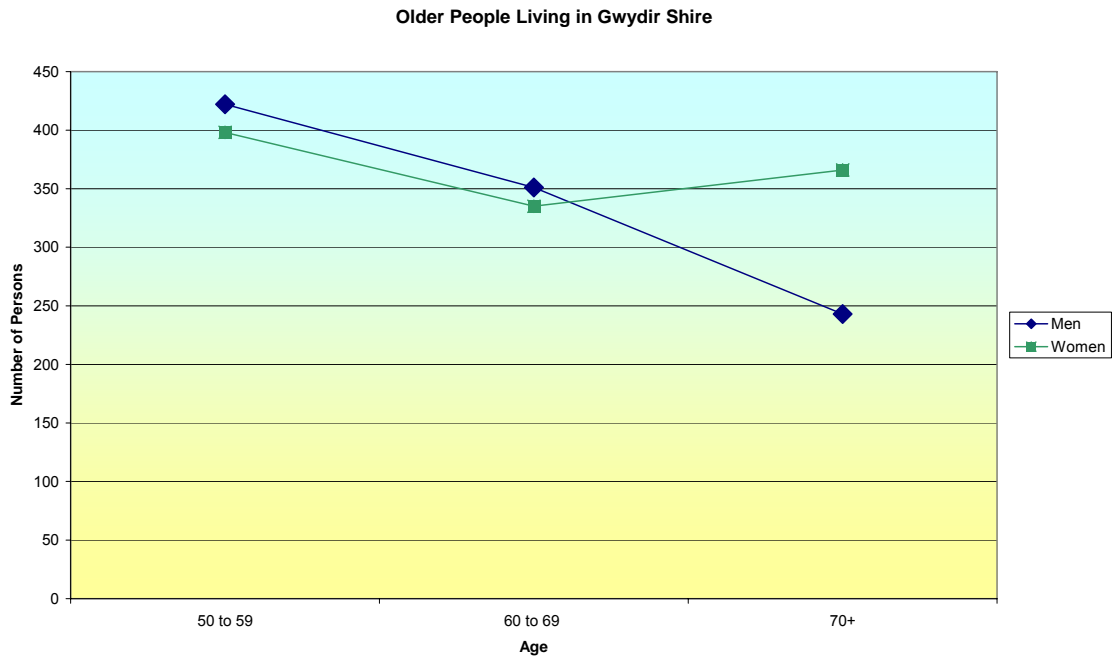
STRATEGY FOR WOMEN CONT'D.....

Facilities	Issues and Gaps	Action Required
<p>Bingara Neighbourhood Centre and Centrelink Agency Operates 9.00 a.m. – 1.00 p.m. from the Old Courthouse Building. Centrelink forms can be faxed and information available.</p> <p>The Neighbourhood Centre provides information on services available and referrals can be made.</p> <p>It is also a link to the Shires Community Services workers and houses the RTA agency.</p> <p>There are three public access computers</p>	<p>Service well utilised by local community and Centrelink consider agency to be operating satisfactorily.</p> <p>The Neighborhood Centre was developed with the objective of building a strong community with social capital while undertaking community development, so that the community is well informed, resourced and connected as well as embracing equity and diversity. This has not yet been achieved and more thought needs to go into identifying community needs and developing better partnerships with other services.</p> <p>Low level of funding received for Neighbourhood Centre</p> <p>These computers were provided by the Better Service Delivery program and are often not working or not connected to the internet.</p>	<p>Monitor costs of operation to ensure that Centrelink funding is covering costs of Service. Consult with other Councils operating Centrelink agencies to maximise efficiencies and improve service.</p> <p>Better signage and increased community awareness through articles in paper, work with other service providers etc Development of a service plan that identifies the services that the Neighbourhood centre will provide to meet local needs Investigate other sources of funding to increase service delivery.</p> <p>Investigate ways of maximising the interaction with other local services and sharing of resources and costs. Eg visiting services, promotion and support of the Gwydir Learning Region.</p> <p>New computers need to be purchased and funding sought to maintain and promote the service.</p>
<p>Gwydir Learning Region The Gwydir Learning Region focuses on improving the educational, social and economic outcomes for residents of the local community</p> <p>The Gwydir Learning Region was initially established in 2002 as a partnership involving three Shire Councils (Yallaroi, Bingara and Barraba), Warialda High School and TAFE NSW New England Institute. Following amalgamation in 2004 the Gwydir Learning Region formally became a sub-committee of the Gwydir Shire Council.</p>	<p>Community is still not aware of benefits</p> <p>Collaboration between services and organisations is still slow and communication is sometimes unclear</p> <p>Better links need to be established</p>	<p>Promote and support the GLR through Neighbourhood Centre, Youth Service, Schools, Centrelink and other community organisations to heighten awareness of the importance of a learning community</p>

STRATEGY FOR WOMEN CONT'D.....

Facilities	Issues and gaps	Action Required
<p>Health Support Groups Cancer Council, Diabetes Group, Carers Program and Red Cross all have active groups in the Shire.</p>	<p>Volunteer workers who need support such as meeting venue and administrative support.</p>	<p>Council to continue to support these groups. Promote these services through a community directory, or a community noticeboard</p>
<p>Volunteers Many social needs are met through a range of community groups such as the Play groups, CWA, Adult Learning Association, Arts and Craft groups, Red Cross, Gardening Clubs, Hospital Auxiliaries, and the Gwydir Learning Region.</p>	<p>There is no central listing of these groups available to new residents or others wishing to join.</p> <p>These groups rely on volunteers who are often involved in other voluntary work. Many of the volunteers are aging and there are not younger volunteers replacing them.</p> <p>Occupational Health & Safety and other legislation effects volunteers and needs to be addressed in training of volunteers.</p> <p>There is concern that there are people in our Shire who are lonely and isolated. There is further isolation for those living outside the town communities.</p>	<p>Maintain listings of organisations in community directory. Voluntary work needs to be recognised as a major contribution in our community. Council should continue to recognise this in awards such as Australia Day awards or special functions. Council to encourage further development of volunteers through developing a register using the Neighbourhood Centre and the CTC to coordinate the project. Training and support of volunteers should also be considered.</p> <p>Investigate ways of encouraging younger volunteers: eg. links with the schools.</p> <p>Promote 'socially' focused courses through Adult and Community Education.</p>
<p>Domestic Violence Moree Women's Refuge A worker from Moree visits the Shire fortnightly and arrangements are in place for transporting women to refuge</p>	<p>Limited knowledge of the service locally. The issue of Domestic violence has not been well publicised in our community.</p>	<p>Agencies such as the Neighbourhood Centre or the CTC could raise the issue of Domestic Violence in our communities.</p> <p>Education and public awareness could be addressed. Liaison with Regional Violence Prevention officer based in Tamworth.</p> <p>Update the list of services to assist women included in the community Directory.</p>

4.4 OLDER PEOPLE



The proportion of residents over 65 years of age is likely to increase in line with the general ageing of the Australian population.

The isolated and ageing population in Gwydir Shire has put a strain on existing services although there is a range of aged care services to support older people living at home in Bingara and Wyallda. District level services funded under the Home and Community Care (HACC) Program are based in Bingara and Wyallda and serve the Gwydir region. They run Meals on Wheels, social support and transport services which are supported by volunteers. NSW Home Care Service also offers assistance to frail and the aged and to their carers.



4.4.1 STRATEGY FOR OLDER PEOPLE

Facilities	Issues and Gaps	Action Required
<p>Council owned buildings Public Halls Squash Centre Warialda Library & Gem Centre HACC Offices & Retail Shops Economic Development Office Carinda House Aged and Community housing Naroo Hostel Caravan Parks Amenities & Cabins Swimming Pools Nicholson Street Oval Kiosk/Amenities Cranky Rock Council Chambers & Offices Supper Room Civic Centre Bingara Museum Bingara Court House National Bank & Residence Bingara Pre-School Bingara Senior Citizens Centre Roxy Theatre Complex Bingara Medical Centre Whitfield Place Fay's Park Bingara Arts Centre Gwydir Oval Grandstand, Kiosk & Amenities Youth Centre Cunningham Park Bingara & Warialda Cemeteries, Upper Bingara School House Gravesend Church Museum GLR Learning Centres (Warialda & Bingara)</p>	<p>Improve the access to all public buildings to ensure that they are accessible to disabled and frail aged.</p> <p>Community perceptions of needs of frail aged persons</p> <p>Large amount of buildings to convert to aged or disabled access</p> <p>Use of many buildings and facilities is declining while others are increasing.</p> <p>While many of the public halls have been upgraded considerable further work needs to be undertaken to ensure safety of elderly residents approaching and using these facilities.</p> <p>Lack of signage for frail aged or disabled access points</p> <p>Maintenance and repair of older building is costly and time consuming</p>	<p>Seek funding from Premier's Department re public building infrastructure upgrade</p> <p>Signs installed to show disabled entry to all public Council owned buildings.</p> <p>Develop a comprehensive maintenance program for public buildings.</p> <p>Evaluate the usage of Council's public buildings and rationalise the number to a core group capable of meeting the demand and being maintained at an acceptable level of maintenance.</p> <p>Education program for community understanding of needs of frail aged and disabled.</p> <p>These buildings are potential social meeting places to support the needs of older people in the community and promoting the use of these buildings for this purpose is necessary to keep them viable.</p> <p>Encourage older residents to participate in Council activities located in public or Council owned premises to expand social capital. Eg: Preschool, Roxy, Vacation care, Museum etc.</p>

STRATEGY FOR OLDER PEOPLE CONT'D.....

Facilities	Issues and Gaps	Action Required
<p>Home and Community Care Services (HACC) Coordinators who manage the Meals on Wheels Service and support older and disabled residents in their home. Volunteers and staff assist the coordinators in service provision.</p>	<p>Volunteers are aged and over extended.</p> <p>Access to vehicles for patient transport is sometimes difficult.</p> <p>Large distances to cover</p> <p>Future replacement of the Warialda Community Bus</p>	<p>Continuing recognition of volunteers at Council award ceremonies such as Australia Day.</p> <p>Promote volunteer program to actively seek new volunteers and reward those already volunteering</p> <p>Ensure that adequate provision of sufficient reserve funds is made for the cost of replacement.</p>
<p>Council owned retirement units. Bingara and Warialda aged residents pay rent and need to be able to live independently. Council maintain the units and lawns. No other support services are provided by Council</p>	<p>Waiting list maintained by Council but no clear policy regarding how decisions are made.</p> <p>No Retirement Village</p> <p>No formal mechanism for residents to contribute to the management of the units</p> <p>Set maintenance program for units.</p> <p>Council need ways of determining the need for more unit development.</p> <p>No clear policy on intake or assessment of needs.</p>	<p>Prepare waiting list policy and consider individual needs and ability to live independently.</p> <p>Develop a Retirement Village Management Plan and submit to Department of Fair Trading annually. Meet with residents and determine ways of setting up appropriate communication channels.</p> <p>Environmental Services Officer to inspect units and continue with maintenance program.</p> <p>Seek funding for upgrade to wheel chair accessible facilities.</p> <p>Advertise annually requesting residents to register if needing units in future.</p> <p>Finalise policy for intake, assessment and review procedures for all community housing in the Shire.</p> <p>Review rentals bi annually.</p>
<p>Caravan Park Long term rental at caravan parks.</p>	<p>Need for long term management plans for the Council's Caravan Parks regarding resident's and tourism needs.</p> <p>North Star caravan Park in disrepair and not attractive as a long term residence also due to isolation</p>	<p>Development of a Management Plan for the Caravan Parks including consultation with permanent residents.</p> <p>Consult with Environmental Services regarding upgrading this facility to an acceptable standard or closing the facilities.</p>
<p>Bingara and Warialda Day Care Centres provide a number of social and recreational activities for the elderly.</p>	<p>This service is well patronised</p>	<p>Look at possible partnerships with Youth Service to share space at Youth Centre to encourage gentle exercise like air hockey or snooker.</p>

STRATEGY FOR OLDER PEOPLE CONT'D.....

Facilities	Issues and Gaps	Action Required
<p>Council Sporting Fields and Facilities Gwydir Oval, Nicholson St Oval Warialda Recreation Ground</p> <p>Golf and Bowls are played at the Bingara Sporting Club and Warialda Golf and Bowling Club</p>	<p>Older residents are usually not involved in sports that access the Council's sporting ovals.</p> <p>Due to an increase in illnesses such as Stroke, Diabetes, Coronary heart Disease and tobacco and alcohol related conditions and because of the proportion of older people in our Shire as well as obesity in persons aged over 16 years of age, the need for physical activity is greater now than ever before. There are limited avenues for gentle exercise for older people currently in the Shire.</p> <p>A regular small bus load of older people attend Barraba Hydrotherapy Centre on a weekly basis from Bingara but limited places are available.</p> <p>There is some interest in the development of Gentle Exercise classes and Walking groups in the Shire. There are no permanent groups currently operating.</p>	<p>Develop a Physical Activity Plan for the Shire with an emphasis on increasing the opportunities for physical activity for older residents.</p> <p>Council to develop Walking Tracks that have good access suitable for older people. Appropriate rest seating to be provided.</p> <p>Work in partnership with NSW Department of Sport and Recreation to develop a Walking for Pleasure group.</p> <p>Investigate through consultation the possibility of early morning aqua aerobics at the swimming pools in summer or seek funding for a small heated pool in one of the pool complexes for use in winter and summer.</p> <p>Investigate costs related to staffing and supervision during times when pool is closed to public</p> <p>Investigate access to the "WOW" Gymnasium during the day when the facility is closed currently.</p>
<p>Council footpaths, Walking Tracks and Bike tracks</p>	<p>Some areas of the Shire are quite dark at night. Review of the street lighting needs to be conducted in all towns and villages.</p> <p>Older residents also expressed concern for pedestrian safety in the CBD with young children riding bicycles and skate boards even though signs restrict this practice in Bingara it does not apply in other towns and is not policed satisfactorily.</p> <p>Residents who attended the public meetings were not concerned regarding personal safety and crime but this may need to be monitored with local police and the communities.</p>	<p>A street lighting review to be conducted.</p> <p>Liaison with Council's Traffic Committee regarding these concerns and determination if bicycle racks can be planned into future Main Street work and bike riding banned from main shopping Centres across the Shire.</p> <p>Liaison with local police and consider further consultation of any increase in crime and concern regarding safety in the community.</p> <p>Explore a partnership possibility with the School of Occupational Therapy, Newcastle University, to develop a Disabled Access Plan</p>

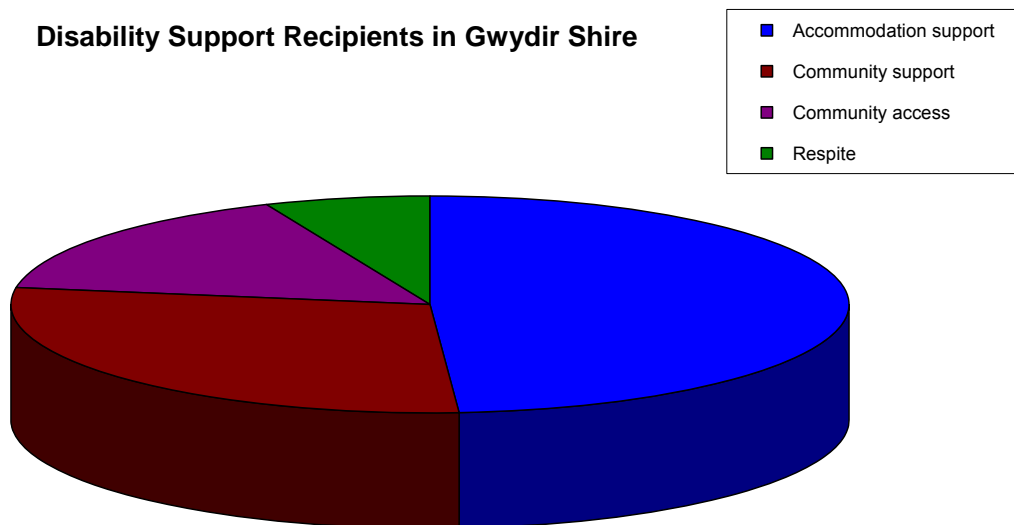
STRATEGY FOR OLDER PEOPLE CONT'D.....

Facilities	Issues and Gaps	Action Required
<p>Libraries The library in Bingara is currently located in the Shire Office building and is open in office hours. There is no librarian, with the Cashier having responsibility for the library. The library has 3 computers with internet access that can be used by the public for research purposes.</p> <p>Warialda library is located in Hope Street in the Tourist Information and CTC. Again there is no dedicated Librarian and the responsibility falls on other council staff</p>	<p>Older residents are concerned that there is only a limited variety of books available, particularly large print books. Users of the library do not seem skilled in technology and do not use the computers to access the central catalogue to order books.</p> <p>Both of Council's libraries have space restrictions and need expansion.</p>	<p>Better liaison with the Central Northern Library regarding the type of books local users read. Request for more large print books in library. Central Northern Library requested to assist in educating users in the services available through Central Northern libraries, catalogues, ordering over the internet etc. Long term the development of the libraries may be best suited to the employment of specialist library staff and separate buildings. Council need to consider alternative locations that maximise opening hours, access, and control costs related to staffing. Consultation with Central Northern Library and liaison with other small towns re the provision of library services is required.</p>
<p>Motorised Scooters</p>	<p>Large numbers of older residents rely on motorised scooters for transport. They are required by law to follow rules of a pedestrian. Concerns by these users and other older people that some footpaths are uneven and a fall hazard.</p>	<p>Education course for motorised scooter users annually to ensure that they understand their responsibilities.</p> <p>Continue footpath from Hall's Creek to Pool alongside Cunningham Park and onto Bingara Hospital and Touriandi Lodge.</p> <p>Development of a Pedestrian Access Plan to ensure that pedestrians' needs are considered in future capital works improvements for the Shire.</p> <p>Seek funding for upgrades in Warialda to improve access to Hospital grounds</p>
<p>Naroo Hostel Council run frail aged facility</p>	<p>Aged care placement is challenging for families. The decision to move to residential care is usually made when a traumatic event has occurred or there is a major change in the health of the person requiring extra care. Unfortunately, families often leave the decision to move until they have a crisis facing them and this increases stress on all concerned.</p>	<p>Council to support transitional programs from open days to private visits at the facilities.</p> <p>Make Families aware of counselling and related services to ensure smooth transition</p>

4.5 People with a Disability

There are over 350 people in Gwydir Shire receiving a Disability Support Pension. This is approximately 6% of the Shire's population and does not include those people over 65 years of age who would be receiving an Age based Pension. There is a higher proportion of the local population requiring disability services than in the state. This would chiefly be related to the higher proportion of older persons living in the Shire.

Disability Support Recipients in Gwydir Shire



4.5.1 STRATEGY FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

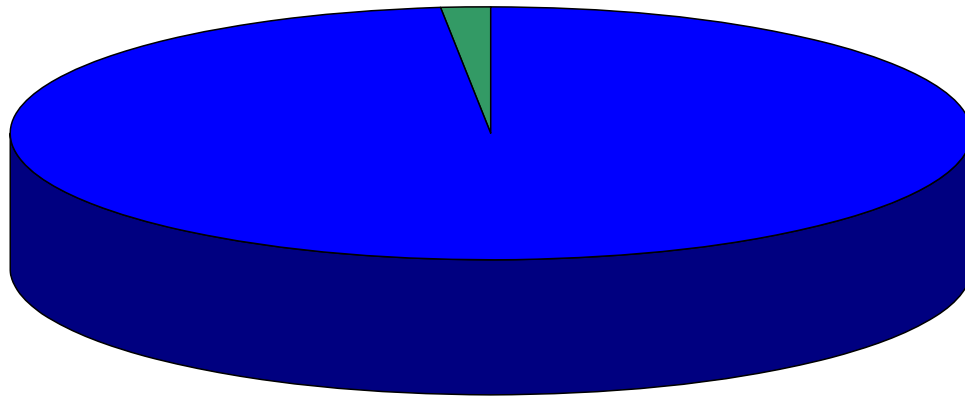
Facilities	Issues and Gaps	Action Required
<p>Home and Community Care Services (HACC) Coordinators who manage the Meals on Wheels Service and support older and disabled residents in their home. Volunteers and staff assist the coordinators in service provision.</p>	<p>Volunteers are aged and over extended. Access to vehicles for patient transport is sometimes difficult. Large distances to cover</p>	<p>Continuing recognition of volunteers at Council award ceremonies such as Australia Day. Promote volunteer program to actively seek new volunteers and reward those already volunteering</p>
<p>Council buildings and other public buildings</p>	<p>Poor access and signage if alternative access available</p>	<p>Develop a Disability Plan</p>
<p>Public Toilets</p>	<p>There are very few disabled toilets in the Shire</p>	<p>Ensure that all new public buildings or renovations comply with the current standards..</p>
<p>Sunnyfield Association Living Linkages Program</p>	<p>Recent closure of only regional service based in Bingara.</p>	<p>Consult staff regarding disability issues</p>
<p>Disabled Parking</p>	<p>Lack of Disabled Parking in the Shire</p>	<p>Investigate expanding the parking for disabled persons in the main shopping area of all towns and other public access areas. Refer to the Local Traffic Committee for implementation and monitoring.</p>
<p>Gwydir Shire Carer Support Program Developing practical resources that meet the needs of carers in this Shire, eg, information kits, flowcharts Facilitating regular carer support meetings in a range of sites in the Shire Formalising a local carer group to advocate for carer needs in rural areas Developing social activities for specific carer groups Developing education session for carers, including stress management, medication management, and other issues as they are identified by carers Delivering a media campaign targeting existing and 'non-identified' carers and the wider community to engage carers and promote awareness of carer value</p>	<p>Funding for the program ends in early 2007 Difficult to monitor success of program After identifying needs of carers in the Shire making sure that these needs are addressed and outcomes are continually monitored Lack of the availability of appropriate Respite Facilities.</p>	<p>Include carers in the Council disability plan Set up community members to assist in maintaining regular meetings of carers groups in the Shire once the funding has ceased. Lobby the State Government to address the Respite Care need.</p>

4.6 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (ATSI)

The principal towns of Gwydir Shire, Bingara and Warialda, both have Aboriginal names. Bingara was the Aboriginal name for a creek or shallow crossing, and Warialda the word used for a 'place of wild honey'. In The Gwydir Shire, however, the ATSI population does not form a significant part of the total population. There are only 92 residents of ATSI decent (1.6%) The indigenous population is young, with a median age of only 16 years.

This appears to be in contrast to its history with the Myall Creek Massacre Memorial site being located in the Shire. This site has been set up by a community group which hold a service each June to commemorate the lives lost and the landmark legal battle which took place following the event..

Numbers of Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander Residents
1.6% of total population



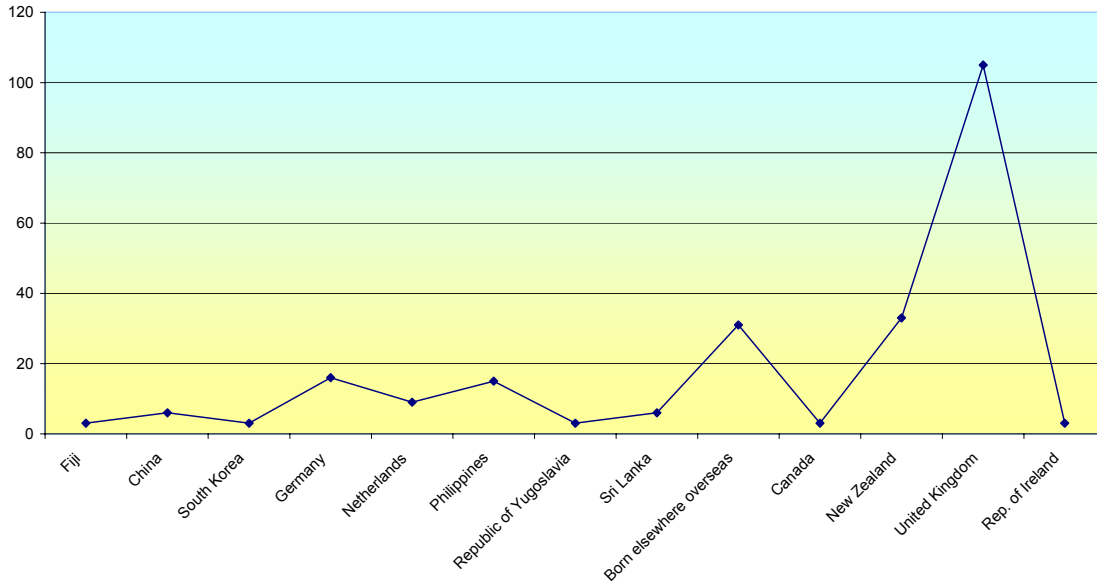
4.6.1 STRATEGY FOR ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE

Facilities	Issues and Gaps	Action Required
Myall Creek Memorial	<p>Lack of certainty regarding the on-going maintenance of the memorial site and its legal status.</p> <p>Public liability insurance: Which organisation is responsible in the event of an insurance claim?</p> <p>Vandalism of the site and costs associated with repair</p>	<p>That Council maintains its current level of support for Memorial Ceremony held each June.</p> <p>Lobby State Government to resolve the current uncertainty regarding the status of the land.</p> <p>That Council work with the Myall Creek Memorial Committee to raise local awareness of the significance of the memorial. This could be done in partnership with local schools during NAIDOC week.</p>
Council Community Services Neighbourhood Centre, Preschools, Toy Libraries, Youth Service	Staff may not be trained in dealing with ATSI clients	<p>Increase staff awareness of cultural issues and services available</p> <p>Ensure that the services provide materials that are culturally sensitive</p>
NAIDOC week	Staff and community not aware of cultural importance	Incorporate family service and youth service in activities with schools to encourage participation of family and council staff
Cultural sensitivity	Lack of cultural acceptance and acknowledgement of the traditional owners.	Council to lead by example in displaying cultural sensitivity.



4.7 Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds

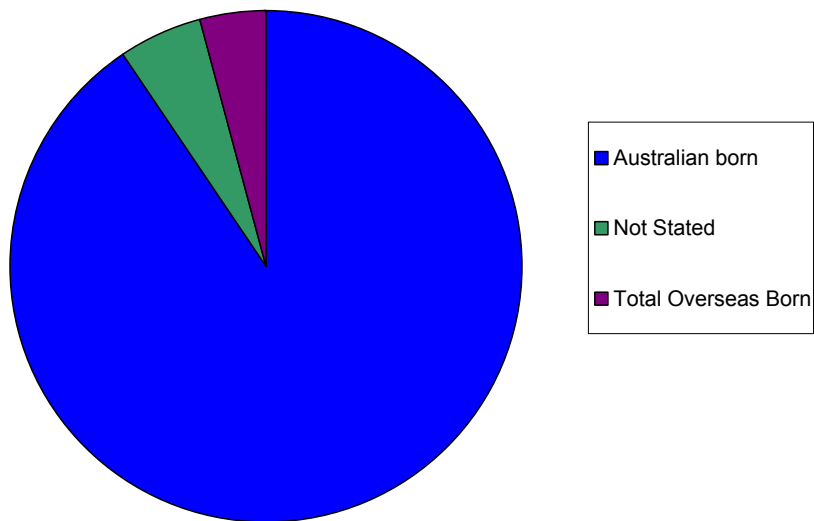
People Born Overseas



The proportion of Australian born and English speaking people is extremely high (90.7% and 94.3% respectively)

Germany and The Philippines were the two major non-English speaking nations of residents living in Gwydir (16 and 15 people respectively). The United Kingdom and New Zealand are the two major English speaking nations of origin of residents who now live in the Gwydir Shire (105 and 33 people respectively)

Place Of Birth of Shire Residents



4.7.1 STRATEGY FOR CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE PEOPLE

Facilities	Issues and Gaps	Action Required
Council Community Services Neighbourhood Centre Centrelink Agency Gwydir Youth Service	Staff lack training in needs of CALD clients as they are not a regular client group	Access training as required Ensure that staff have access to telephone translator services if needed Work towards creating a climate of inclusion.
Council's Children's Services Bingara Pre-school Gwydir Toy Libraries Gwydir Vacation Care	Staff lack training in needs of CALD clients as they are not a regular client group	Access training as required Ensure that multicultural resources are available in programs



5. ACTION PLANS



5.1 HEALTH

The changing socio-economic and demographic dynamics of remote rural regions require innovative approaches to addressing the needs of these areas and this, in particular, applies to health service provision. In terms of public health service provision, Bingara and Warialda have one hospital and one medical centre in each town.

Bingara has a 21-bed hospital consisting of 7 acute care beds and 14 nursing home beds serviced by three visiting Medical Officers. Warialda has a 25-bed hospital consisting of 10 acute care beds and 15 nursing home beds, also serviced by three visiting Medical Officers, Warialda Hospital is looking to expand and has received funding for extra beds. Both hospitals are undergoing planned upgrades. Other services provided include:- Optometry, Podiatry, Physiotherapy, Antenatal Classes, Community Nursing, Community Health, Day Care, Early Childhood Health Service Preschool screenings, a Dietician, Mental Health, Women's Health Issues and a Speech Therapist.

Warialda Medical Centre is run by a husband and wife team and provides General Practice service, Acute Emergency Service, Women's Health, Acupuncture and Pathology. Interestingly, the Medical Centre has approximately 6,500 patients registered there (Warialda's population is approximately 1,400) with a daily turn-over of 70-80 patients. Not only does the centre require full time relief doctors, the centre has a chronic space problem with a number of services e. g. Speech Therapy unable to be undertaken which is limiting the Centre's ability to meet the primary health needs of the community (Warialda Medical Centre Funding Proposal, 2005).

Funding has been obtained from the Commonwealth Government (\$220,000) to proceed with development of the Medical Centre.

The continued access to 'bulk billing' medical services and gender range of doctors are important elements to the residents and for the continuing health of the community. Access to these health services is a major problem for the smaller towns and villages in the Gwydir Shire. These communities need to visit larger centres to see a specialist or rely on visiting services from Inverell or Moree as the population base isn't large enough.

Residents who need to travel for treatment to major centres such as Sydney, Newcastle and Brisbane face significant costs for travel and accommodation. The NSW Department of Health does have a system to cover some of these costs (IPTASS) however there are time delays in payments being made which is difficult for low income earners to manage. This has been raised as a major problem for low income earners who need to access medical treatment in Tamworth regularly. Currently older and disabled residents may access the Community Transport Program and a small fee is charged to cover the expenses involved.

A high proportion of older residents suffer from an increase of illnesses such as stroke, diabetes, coronary heart disease, suicide, injury, tobacco and alcohol related conditions and obesity. Research has shown that many of these illnesses would be reduced through improved physical activity and access to better primary health care support programs.

Dental services are not available in Gwydir Shire. Residents need to travel to regional centres such as Tamworth, Armidale Goondiwindi, Inverell or Moree. Those unable to afford private dental treatment may be able to access public clinics however there are eligibility criteria to access these services. The Council is in negotiation with a dentist who may be able to provide a regular visiting service.

Mental health and suicide has been identified as an area of major concern across the Shire. With the prolonged drought and lack of meaningful employment this issue has become more and more prevalent. While counselling is available through local area health services like the primary health care network, there are often waiting lists or vacant positions in specialised areas. Depression is starting to affect many farming families and needs to be addressed in our more isolated areas.

SERVICES AVAILABLE	TARGET GROUP	GAPS	RECOMMENDATIONS
Warialda and Bingara Multi Purpose Service	All	New facilities are planned to commence construction for both Warialda and Bingara in November 2006	Council need to work with the community and Hunter New England Health Service to ensure that it meets the needs of the Gwydir community.
Bingara Medical Centre 2-3 General practitioners are based at the centre with nursing and other allied Health services using the building	All	High cost to Council for the provision of a medical practice to the community.	Council to work with Hunter New England Health Service and other levels of government to determine if there are other sources of funding to support the Council's provision of medical services.
Warialda Medical Centre 2-3 General practitioners are based at the centre with nursing and other allied Health services using the building	All	The building cannot cope with the current and projected demand for space.	Council to continue with its proposal to convert the Warialda Medical Centre to a 'walk-in, walk-out' facility.
Dental Service	All	No dentist available within the Shire	Council to continue to seek out suitably qualified Practitioners.
Primary Health Care Network	All	Community not aware of importance of network. Difficult to achieve outcomes regularly with constraints	Continued support and contribution to the Primary Health Care Network is essential. This will help to ensure that information is reaching rural and remote communities in the North and South of the Shire.
Mental Health Support Group and Carer Support Group	All	Community awareness of issues	Council to support forums and information sessions regarding issues of mental health. Council to support regular events that promote psychological well being and assist in identifying warning signs associated with mental illness. Council to continue support for carer groups

5.2 TRANSPORT

Given that Gwydir Shire does not have a regional town within its borders, Shire residents must commute to Inverell, Tamworth, Armidale, Narrabri, Moree or Goondiwindi for a range of services.

The major regional towns, Tamworth and Armidale are approximately the same distance from the Shire, however there is better access to Tamworth for most Gwydir residents. The NSW Department of Planning is currently developing a Transport Strategy for the Barwon Region which includes Gwydir Shire, however this may mean that some transport options may be removed or reduced.

There are no passenger rail services currently operating within the Shire, however Countrylink provides coach services that links to the rail network.

There is no public transport system in either of the main towns. Rural children can access the School Bus service but there is no intertown service within the Shire. A Countrylink bus travels to and from Tamworth six days per week connecting to rail services to other major centres.

There is a daily rail service from Sydney to Armidale. A connecting coach service meets the train at Tamworth and transports passengers via Bingara and Warialda to Inverell six days per week. A one-way journey takes approximately 10 hours and there is a similar service in the other direction. There is a daily Sydney / Moree passenger train service which also takes 10 hours. However passengers travelling to the Gwydir Shire are limited by the availability of the coach service which runs to Grafton only three times per week. An overnight stay in Moree is required to catch the morning coach that stops at Gravesend and Warialda on its way to Grafton.

Apart from the Countrylink coach services there are no coach services direct from the Shire to either Sydney or Brisbane. Residents wishing to travel to the major cities by coach have to meet the Melbourne/Brisbane service via the Newell Highway at Moree, or the Sydney/Brisbane service via the New England Highway at Tamworth, Armidale or Glen Innes.

Community bus services are provided by the Council for Bingara and by Inverell Health and Community Care (HACC) for Warialda and Bingara. Warialda also has a community bus which takes HACC clients to Inverell via Delungra. This bus could be used for more community events and as transport between the towns and villages more effectively.

There is neither a taxi service nor commercial local bus service in Gwydir Shire. A subsidised school bus service that residents can use operates on weekdays; however it travels only once a day in each direction and only to the nearest school.

Within the towns the transport options include private motor car, walking and bicycles, motorised scooters or the Community Transport program. There are an increasing number of motorised Scooters being used by older and disabled residents. These vehicles are considered to be pedestrian vehicles and are required to operate on the footpaths, with good access an important issue. There needs to be further planning and maintenance to ensure that the Council's footpaths and walkways allow for the motorised scooter and disabled and/or older residents' needs.

Service	Target	Gaps	Recommendations
Roads within the Shire	All	Need to maintain current roads and plan for further improvements in local roads	Work with RTA and other levels of government to upgrade roads
Community Transport Program	Aged Disabled Low income	Large capacity people Mover required. Access for other transport disadvantaged groups	Council support Bingara HACC in application to Dept of Veterans' Affairs for additional funding for larger vehicle Develop a plan for better use of community buses.
Tamworth Community Bus Bi-monthly bus to Tamworth	Aged Disabled	Lack of promotion of service and community awareness	That vacancies on the bus be offered to other transport disadvantaged residents
Country Link Bus Service	All	Only travels to Tamworth four days per week and Armidale one day per week The round trip to Armidale is too long, leaves too early and returns very late. This is not a viable transport option for most residents	Survey of residents as to usage of this service and explore options for change with Ministry of Transport. Develop a travel plan for residents so that all services are listed and timetables are accessible for all transport options
Motorised scooters	Aged Disabled	Some footpaths uneven While much work has taken place in Bingara the rest of the Shire needs to be upgraded	Education for users and general community Review of footpaths and access plan for Shire Planning considerations in public buildings
Pedestrian	All	Some footpaths are uneven and needing repair Street lighting needs to be reviewed Additional seating provided along main streets for pedestrians to rest as has been done in Bingara	Develop a Pedestrian plan Major work on some footpaths and walk ways has been completed; a review process needs to be implemented across the Shire to address access and equity.
Bicycles as a form of transport	Children Youth all	No bike tracks in either main town or racks for bike storage in CBD Lack of policing of helmet use	Walking/bicycle tracks be identified as part of the Pedestrian Plan. Bike racks installed in Main Street upgrade for both Bingara and Warialda Liaise with local police concerning the lack of helmet use.

Service	Target	Gaps	Recommendations
<p>Road improvements/ parking</p> <p>In the Gwydir Shire a major community issue from the outlying villages is the condition of the roads, which are difficult to maintain, and costly to upgrade.</p> <p>The capital works program identifies town streets, sealed and unsealed local roads and regional roads requiring construction and maintenance.</p>	All	<p>Main Streets in Warialda are in disrepair. Gravesend and Upper Horton has many dirt back streets within the village areas that should be sealed</p> <p>Many of the villages identified development of caravan parking areas as an issue for tourism, improving the road networks in the shire will provide a boost to the tourism industry.</p>	<p>Review the Council's road work priority program in Warialda, Gravesend and Upper Horton to eliminate dust and address resident respiratory problems</p> <p>Review of Tourism Plan to address needs of residents and tourists.</p>



5.3 SAFETY

Issues relating to safety that were raised in public meetings included an increased Police presence in smaller villages, concern for the Council's playground equipment and pedestrian access issues relating to lighting, road crossings, uneven footpaths, bikes and skate boards in the Central Business Districts and dirt roads . In a 2005 survey of young people in the Shire it was identified by 60% of those surveyed that a lack of police presence was of concern to them and that they would like to see more positive images of our police service. In Bingara the Senior Constable holds regular boxing training sessions and this is extremely helpful in building positive relationships between young people and the police services. This type of activity needs to be encouraged in other towns and villages in the Shire and the possibility of establishing a PCYC needs to be investigated.

ISSUE	TARGET GROUP	GAPS	RECOMMENDATIONS
Street Lighting	All	Some concerns on lighting in areas of the towns and villages	That a street lighting review be conducted with particular attention to high use areas across the Shire services, Schools and other public buildings. The current level of street lighting be compared with the relevant Australian Standard.
Safe access into public buildings	All	Older buildings with access and maintenance reviews needed	Improved lighting and signing for all public buildings and high traffic areas as well as potential crime <i>hot spots</i> and escape routes
Bicycles and skate boards on Footpaths in the CBD.	All	Older residents concerned regarding bicycles and skate boards on footpaths in Central Business District (CBD) not being policed. Plan not implemented in other villages	Council to install bike racks in Main street improvements in Bingara, Warialda and Gravesend. Council to ban skate boards and bicycles on footpaths in CBD of Warialda and Gravesend. Council Ranger to uphold "no go" areas and to consult with local police regarding ongoing monitoring of offenders An education program in partnership with police and RTA needs to be developed and implemented to illustrate the dangers of this practice
Disaster Management planning	All	Disaster Plan need to be reviewed regularly	Council's Disaster Management Committees need to finalise the plan for the entire Shire.
Play equipment in local parks not meeting safety standards	Children	While work has been completed on some parks in the Shire there is still much work to be done in the Northern and Southern end of the Shire.	Funds allocated, grants sought from NSW Sport and Recreation and or community involvement to improve safety and attractiveness of all Council's Parks. Prioritise upgrades of park equipment in line with Australian standards after internal and external consultation

Service	Target	Gaps	Recommendations
Police presence in smaller villages	All	Residents in smaller villages expressed concerns regarding the lack of policing leaving them vulnerable and a target for criminal elements	<p>Consult area command re police levels and look at ways of addressing community concerns.</p> <p>Set up consultation process with community groups and area command.</p> <p>Support application for PCYC</p>



5.4 HOUSING

The majority of the Gwydir Shire population own their homes. Rental accommodation is difficult to obtain for many in the community. Many residents requiring rental accommodation access rental assistance through the NSW Department of Housing and receive bond and rent assistance from Centrelink.

There is limited public housing stock and long waiting lists in Warialda only.

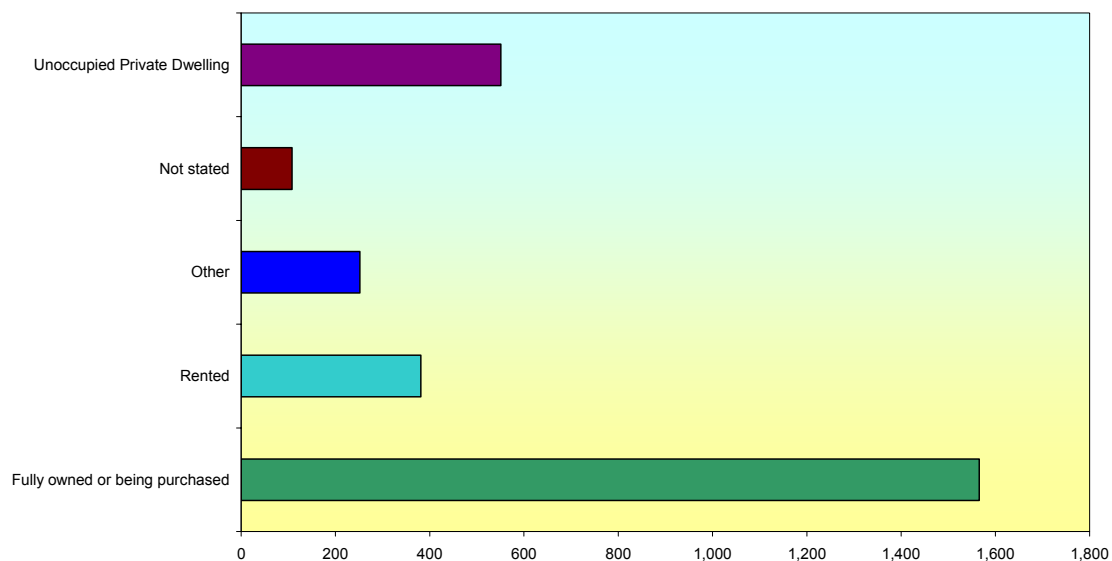
The Gwydir Shire Council does provide Aged Care units in Bingara and Warialda as well as the Bingara and Warialda Caravan Parks. There is more demand than supply for most rental accommodation in the towns.

The Council may need to consider financial incentives to investors to attract investment in real estate or become directly involved in the provision of housing.

Areas of demand include low income earners who need rental accommodation, older residents who no longer need a large home, now needing low maintenance units close to the CBD and families new to the Shire needing larger homes, or homes that will be available for long term rental.

The recent increase in housing prices across the Shire has disadvantaged many new residents looking to buy homes in the Shire. This has made it less attractive to the Tree Changers looking for an affordable country lifestyle.

Gwydir Shire Home Ownership or Rental



ISSUE	TARGET	GAP	RECOMMENDATIONS
Determining the demand for Housing in Gwydir Shire	All	Development planning	<p>Prepare a Housing Plan to determine the needs of the current community, particular focus on the aging community and low income earners who are renting.</p> <p>Finalise a Council Policy for all community and aged housing</p> <p>Liaise with NSW Department of Housing and other small communities facing similar issues</p>
Aged Care Units	Older And disabled	Clear Policy	<p>Document the procedure for allocating the units and waiting list places.</p> <p>Regularly survey the community to ascertain demand for units.</p> <p>Finalise a Council Policy for all community and aged housing</p>
Caravan Parks	Low income earners Older		<p>Review charges</p> <p>Consult long term residents regarding their accommodation needs</p> <p>Establish a Management Plan for the Caravan Parks with Grievance Procedures included in the Plan.</p>
Increase the availability of rental accommodation and/or home purchases for low income earners	Older Disabled All	<p>Lack of unit development for older residents to relocate to as they age.</p> <p>Lack of homes for families moving to Bingara.</p> <p>Lack of rental accommodation for youth and low income earners.</p>	<p>Investigate opportunities to encourage the development of housing units across the Shire.</p> <p>Development of a Housing Plan for the Shire.</p> <p>Work with NSW Housing to expand the Community Housing Partnership program.</p>

5.5 EMPLOYMENT

The total number of people employed in Gwydir Shire is just over 50% of the total labour force population. Of those employed in Gwydir Shire, 34.6% were employed full-time, which was just below the State figure. Part-time employment (13.9%) was well below the state figures (17.1%).

The 41.5% 'Not in the Labour Force' is quite high and exceeds the NENW Region level of 38.1% and 36.0% for NSW. In part, this figure indicates the growing population that has retired from the workplace (ABS, 2001).

Gwydir's unemployment rate at 7.0% is below levels for the NENW Region at 8.8% and NSW at 7.2%.

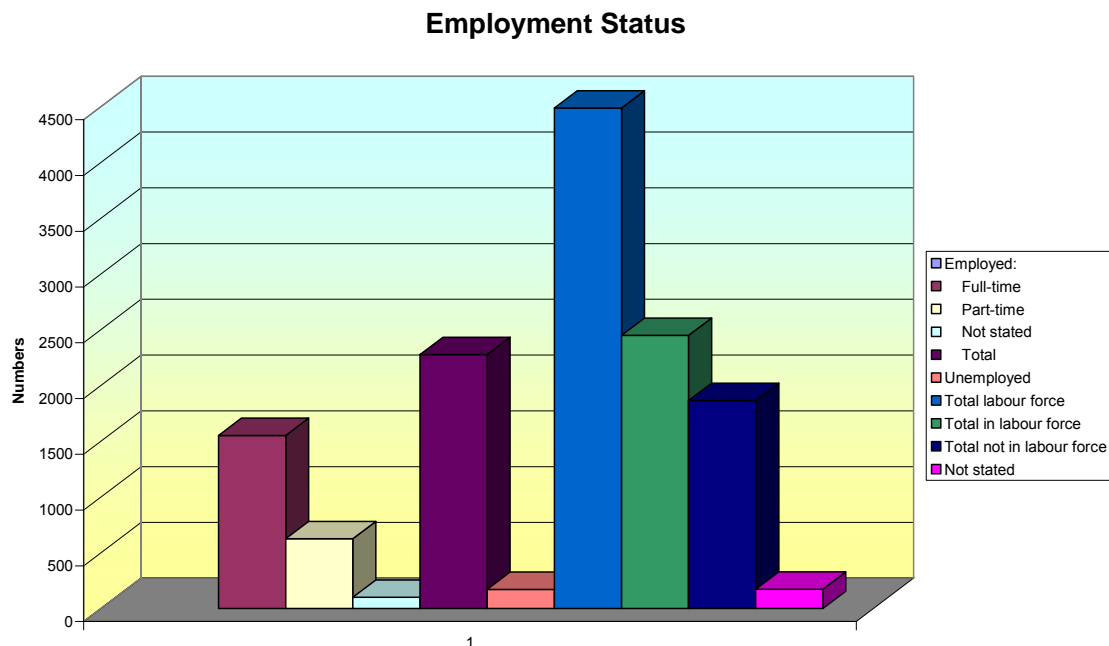
NSW Department of State and Regional Development has funded local government to prepare strategic plans for our Towns and Villages and from this, Tourism has been identified as a growth industry for the Shire.

The Shire has a very high proportion of Managers and Administrators (35%). This figure will include farmers who own and manage their land.

Clerical, Sales and Service Workers are the second largest group with 16.4% of workforce employed in that occupation, but this is relatively low compared to the NSW figure of 30%

There are relatively few Professionals and Associate Professionals 15.6%), compared to the 30.7% for NSW

There is a high proportion of Labourers and Related Workers (14.3%).



ISSUE	TARGET	GAP	RECOMMENDATION
Council to support programs such as Work for the Dole and the Job Network agencies servicing the Shire	All	Long term unemployed people needing assistance	<p>Council to encourage Job Network agencies to visit town</p> <p>Council to utilise Job Network agencies and special programs targeting disadvantaged jobseekers when vacancies arise</p> <p>Council to register as a Group Training Organisation through the GLR</p> <p>Provide continuing support to the vocational trainees through Warialda High and Bingara Central Schools program</p>
Increase the skills of local unemployed persons to increase opportunities for employment	Young People All	Low education levels in the community Levels of unemployment higher than state average	<p>Continue to support and promote life long learning through the Gwydir Learning region</p> <p>Encourage small businesses to be based in the Shire.</p> <p>Employ apprentices and trainees on a regular basis.</p>
The lack of technology use in Gwydir Shire	All	Limited internet access and technology knowledge in the community	<p>Work with Regional bodies and Government services to improve implementation of available technology and communication access in the community</p> <p>Support Community Technology Centre in Warialda and encourage residents to access services provided</p> <p>Encourage open days at the Neighbourhood Centre and CTC in partnership with Adult Education to assist with computer and technology use.</p>



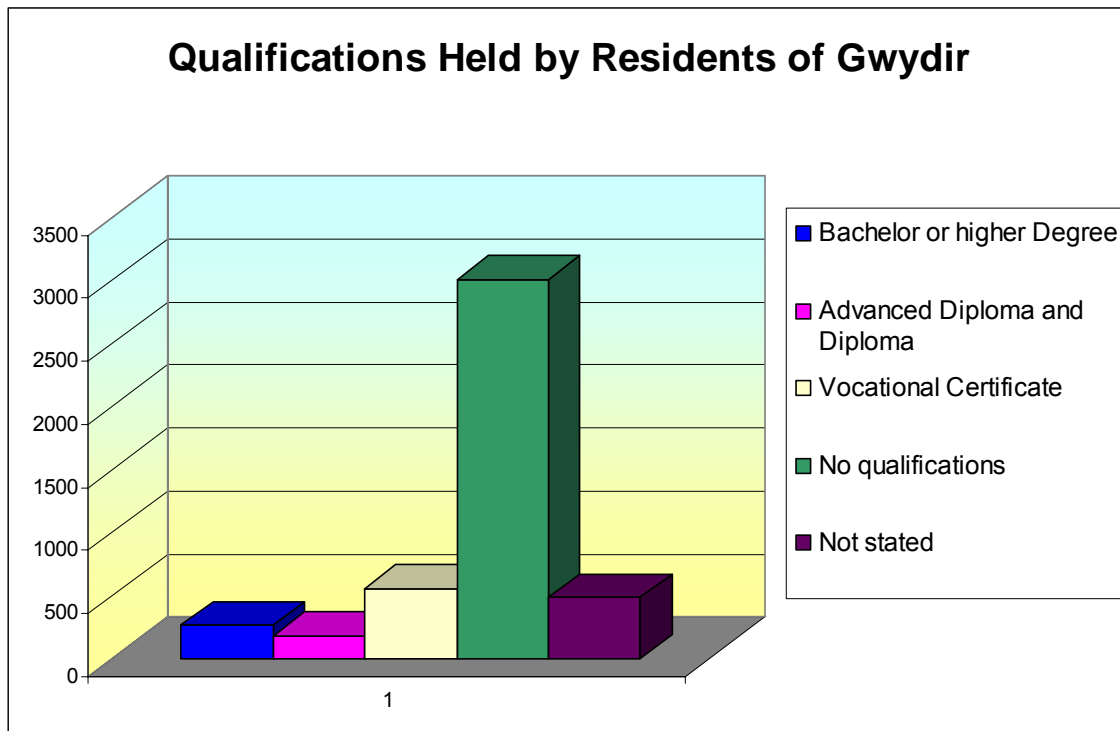
5.6 EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Gwydir Shire has five primary public schools in: Croppa Creek, North Star, Bingara (K-Year 10), Gravesend and Warialda. For Catholic schools, the only parish primary school is St Josephs Primary School in Warialda. There are two high schools in Gwydir Shire, the Bingara Central School (Kindergarten to Year 10) and Warialda High. Students wanting to complete Year 12 attend Warialda High. If parents want to send their children to private schools the students will need to go outside the Shire. There is a community desire to extend Bingara Central High School to Year 12 with 24% of Bingara residents surveyed in the recent Bingara Community Survey (August, 2005) placing it on the top of their list as changes they would like to see over the next 15 years in Bingara. This outcome is under consideration.

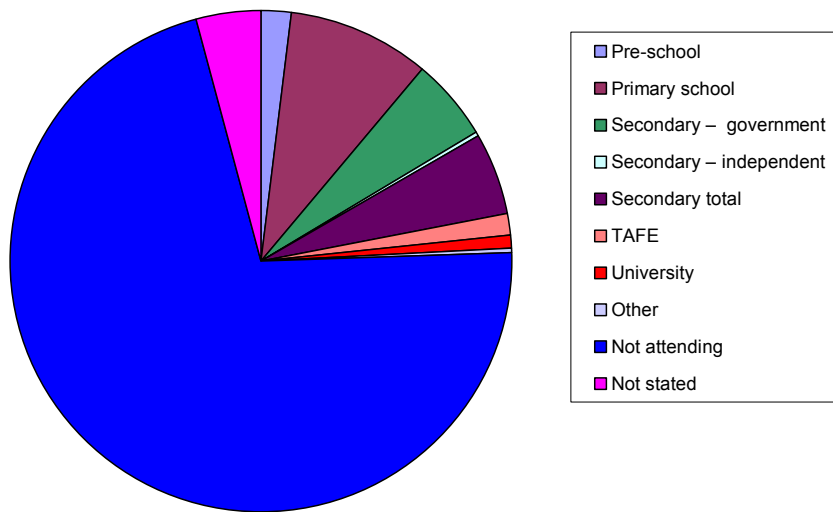
Due to historically lower than average educational achievements, Gwydir Shire Council, Bingara Central School and Warialda High have a commitment to vocational education to up-skill school age and adult students in the local community.

Recently, the Gwydir Shire has placed a strong focus on learning and has been working for a number of years on innovative educational practices to increase the opportunities for learning in schools and the community within *The Gwydir Learning Region*. This initiative is a collection of community, education and Council representatives who are working together to ensure that people of all ages in the community have the best access to learning and education in the Gwydir area.

Prospective students wishing to obtain tertiary education leave the Gwydir Shire as there are limited further education and training facilities.



Educational Institutions Attended



Facilities	Target	Gaps	Recommendations
Warialda High School	Youth	Transition for children from Bingara to Warialda to complete year 11 & 12	<p>Consider Gwydir Learning Region facilitating a transition program for young people moving to Warialda High School for HSC.</p> <p>Continue to work with Warialda High School to increase learning opportunities for all the community through offering TAFE and Adult Education courses using school facilities</p>
Bingara Central School	Children Youth	HSC is not offered at Bingara with students needing to travel to Warialda or other centres for schooling.	<p>Work with Bingara Central School and the community to ensure that local students are not disadvantaged.</p> <p>Consider Gwydir Learning Region facilitating a transition program for young people moving to Warialda High School for HSC.</p> <p>Council to support The Gwydir Learning Region and continue to promote it within the school community to maximise the learning opportunities for the residents of the Shire. Encourage adults to return to education and complete their education.</p> <p>Continue to work with Bingara Central School to increase learning opportunities for all the community through offering TAFE and Adult Education courses using school facilities.</p>

Facilities	Target	Gaps	Recommendations
Gwydir Learning Region	All	<p>Low levels of education and poor literacy in wider community</p> <p>Collaboration between services and organisations is still slow and communication is sometimes unclear</p>	<p>This program has led to more vocational programs being offered to local high school and adult students. Students are graduating with vocational skills that are recognised. This needs to be encouraged and supported.</p> <p>The WOW Fitness Centre has been established and needs to be promoted and succession planning needs to be introduced to ensure the ongoing success of the program</p>
Warialda Primary School	Children		Support the ongoing operations of the school.
St Josephs Catholic School, Croppa Creek, North Star, Gravesend Primary Schools	Children	Low numbers at schools	Support the ongoing operations of the school.
Bingara Learning Centre	All	Lack of use by community groups	More emphasis on promoting the Learning Centre as an option for delivering courses to community. Use as a base for Gwydir Learning Region and look closely and repair and maintenance that is badly needed
Adult Learning Association	All	<p>Lack of training facilities</p> <p>Lack of Computer facilities</p> <p>Limited funding</p>	<p>Work with The Gwydir Learning Region to ensure that Adult Education has equitable access to resources and training facilities</p> <p>Seek other levels of government assistance to set up community training facilities.</p> <p>Approach district schools to provide facilities for training courses.</p>
Difficulty in small employers accessing training	All	Costs and access to suitable training difficult for small employees to access	Work with The Gwydir Learning Region to determine local training needs and increase the access to business and employment training in association with a range of training providers.
<p>Pre-school</p> <p>Bingara - 4 days</p> <p>Warialda - 3 days</p> <p>Gravesend- 1 day</p>	Children	Unmet need	Explore the opportunities to expand pre-school education into every Primary School within the Shire

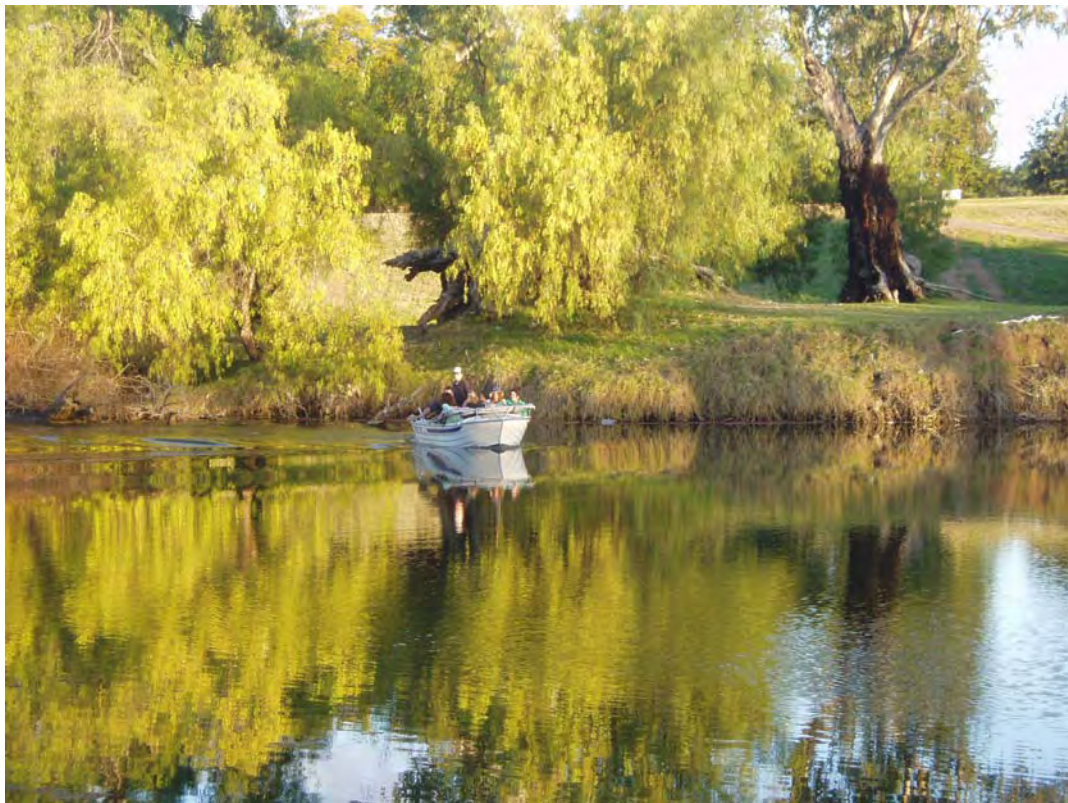
5.7 LEISURE AND RECREATION

The Shire offers many opportunities for those seeking leisure activities, from bird watching and bush walking to horse riding and white water rafting. Gwydir Shire is a unique tourist destination and a wonderful place to live as there is an extremely wide variety of natural and built environments for people to enjoy. While many families visit Gwydir during school holidays it is the older tourists or “Grey Nomads” that are most attracted to our Shire and what it has to offer. These attractions include:

- The Glacial Area
- Cranky Rock
- Gwydir River for camping, boating, swimming and fishing
- Farm Stays
- Trail Rides & Jack/Jillaroo experiences
- Bush Walking & Gem Fossicking
- The Roxy Theatre
- Caravan Parks
- Swimming Pools
- and much more.....

Facilities	Target	Gaps	Recommendations
Sporting Facilities	All	Difficulty to establish sports in Gwydir due to lack of volunteers, committees and sports administration skills	<p>Apply for Capital assistance through NSW Sport and Recreation for the development of Sporting Facilities in the Shire</p> <p>Look at “Active After School Communities” program</p> <p>Work with NSW Sport and Recreation to establish sports such as Athletics, Touch Football and training of volunteers in Sports</p> <p>Employ an appropriately qualified person to co-ordinate the best use of Council’s recreational facilities.</p>
Playgrounds	Children	<p>Old and unsafe equipment</p> <p>Safety concerns re play areas Soft fall needs to be installed in all parks in the Shire</p> <p>Lack of toilet facilities at some parks</p>	<p>Establish and keep records regarding Maintenance program in Council Parks</p> <p>Continue to implement the recommendations made in Council’s Parks & Playgrounds report 2006</p> <p>Investigate and report on the provision of shade covers for play equipment.</p> <p>Work with community groups to upgrade parks or projects and replace old and unsafe equipment</p>

Facilities	Target	Gaps	Recommendations
The Roxy Theatre	All	Need to maintain and increase community ownership in the project Need to promote the theatre program across the Shire and our Region	Volunteers to be trained in tasks relating to the Theatre Look at advertising bus service and encourage people to come to the movies and theatre. Provide events at suitable times for attendance when the bus service is available. Further develop the conferencing and catering capacity of the venue.
Swimming Pools	All	Low use of pools by adults and older people Limited opening hours Staff levels	Encourage physical activity in wider community and investigate ways of encouraging wider community usage of the pool facility. Investigate succession planning for pool managers so that there is backup staff available to avoid unnecessary closures
Bike/Walking Tracks	All	Difficult to access , no clear signage	Investigate funding opportunities through RTA and Sport and Recreation to support the development of Shared Access Paths



5.8 COMMUNITY SERVICES

Although Bingara and Warialda provide the core local facilities and services for the Gwydir catchment, Inverell and Moree provide the district level goods and services.

For regional level facilities and services residents from Gwydir need to go to Armidale, Tamworth or beyond. An overview of issues associated with some of the major community facilities and services are provided below.

5.8.1 CHILDREN'S SERVICES

There are a range of local and district child care services in operation in Gwydir that operate on a part time basis, or are on-call which come to visit smaller communities.

Although there is no dedicated child care centre in Gwydir there are local services that provide support and information for families with babies and children in the town and smaller communities. These include the:

- Gwydir Shire Early Intervention Family Worker

- Play groups in Bingara, Warialda and Gravesend

- Toy Libraries in Bingara and Warialda

- North West In-Home Care

- Ooranga Family Mobile Resources (which provides services to Upper Horton);

- Tharawonga Mobile Resource Unit (provides services to the north of the shire including Crooble, North Star and Yallaroi in particular)

- Vacation Care

- Moree Women's refuge - weekly support for families

- Inverell Youth and Family Support Service

There is also a Child, Youth and Family Health Nurse available across the Shire

In order to overcome Gwydir's geographical isolation in terms of child care, Gwydir Shire has been innovative in moving away from the traditional, dedicated preschool building structure in a fixed location to mobile preschools which serve the Shire villages on a regular but part-time basis. The villages included in this mobile catchment are: North Star, Yallaroi, Crooble, Croppa Creek and Upper Horton. There are now three preschools in the Gwydir Shire. Warialda operates three days per week, Bingara operates four days per week and Gravesend which operates one day per week.

5.8.2 WELFARE AND SUPPORT SERVICES

There are a range of services available to people requiring emergency assistance, counselling and support which are based in Bingara and Wialda town centres. These include the Bingara and Wialda HACC, Centrelink Agencies (in both towns) and associated services including disability support and family counselling services. There is also a St. Vincent de Paul and Salvation Army.

Gwydir Shire Council has also received funding through Hunter New England Health to run a Carers' Program which has identified many different kinds of people caring for others in the community. The program seeks to address issues faced by carers and provide relevant support and referral.

However, district level services are located in Inverell and Moree, providing welfare and support based government agencies and non-government organisations.

5.8.3 SERVICES FOR OLDER PEOPLE

The isolated and ageing population in Gwydir Shire has put a strain on existing services although there is a range of aged care services to support older people living at home in Bingara and Wialda. District level services funded under the Home and Community Care (HACC) Program are based in Bingara and Wialda and serve the Gwydir region. They run Meals on Wheels, social support and transport services which are supported by volunteers. NSW Homecare Service also offers assistance to frail and the aged and to their carers.

Bingara and Wialda Day Care Centres provide a number of social and recreational activities for the elderly. Other such activities are provided in some of the community centres, service clubs and in church halls.

Naroo Frail Aged Hostel, Touriandi Lodge, Wialda Aged Units and Whitfield Place Aged Units provide aged care accommodation facilities in Bingara and Wialda town centres.

Community transport is on offer for residents in Bingara and Wialda. The Wialda bus service travels to Inverell fortnightly and stops for pick ups in the smaller villages.

5.8.4 SERVICES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Gwydir Shire Council has a full time youth worker who covers the Shire providing access to services on an advocacy and referral basis. The Council provides a full *Youth Week* program which covers the Shire.

Specialist services for young people (health, employment, training, counselling) are available in Bingara and Wialda. There is also a youth nurse in the Bingara and Wialda Community Health Centres.

There is a youth centre in Bingara open two afternoons per week and there are a number of youth clubs operating in Gwydir, providing sporting and recreational activities for young people. The Wialda skate park was opened in March 2005.

Facilities	Target	Gaps	Recommendations
Bingara Neighbourhood Centre and Centrelink Agency	All	<p>The Neighborhood Centre was developed with the objective of building a strong community with social capital while undertaking community development, so that the community is well informed, resourced and connected as well as embracing equity and diversity, this has not yet been achieved and more thought needs to go into identifying community needs and developing better partnerships with other services.</p> <p>Low level of funding received for Neighbourhood Centre</p> <p>The computers were provided by the Better Service Delivery program and are often not working or not connected to the internet.</p>	<p>Monitor costs of operation to ensure that Centrelink funding is covering the costs of the service.</p> <p>Consult with other Councils operating Centrelink agencies to maximise efficiencies and improve service.</p> <p>Better signage and increased community awareness through articles in paper, work with other service providers etc</p> <p>Development of a service plan that identifies the services that the Neighbourhood centre will provide to meet local needs</p> <p>Investigate other sources of funding to increase service delivery.</p> <p>Investigate ways of maximising the interaction with other local services and sharing of resources and costs. Eg visiting services, Adult Education promotion and support of the Gwydir Learning Region.</p> <p>New computers need to be purchased and funding sought to maintain and promote the service.</p>
Children's Services Bingara Preschool Gwydir Toy Libraries Gwydir Vacation Care Program Tharawonga Mobile Preschool Early Intervention Family Service	Children Women	Lack of childcare for 0 to 2 year olds.	<p>Liaise with the current service providers and the Inverell and District Family Day Care Service to establish the need and explore any opportunities to meet the need.</p> <p>Consider financial incentives to encourage suitable carers into Family Day Care.</p> <p>Look at establishing more playgroups with suitable meeting places across the Shire with educational outcomes for parents and children</p>
Gwydir Youth Service	Youth	Distance and travel are the main issues. It is difficult to make sure that the whole Shire is covered	<p>A Youth Council needs to be established and supported by Council so that all towns and villages are involved and their young people are represented.</p> <p>The Mayor for a day program needs to be explored and other forms of interaction with young people needs to be encouraged.</p>

5.9 ACCESS

Facilities	Target	Gaps	Recommendations
Council Owned Buildings	Disabled Older	Some buildings have poor access and/or poor signage regarding disabled access	Improved access planned in consultation with HACC workers and client representatives
Footpaths and Public Areas	Disabled Older	Old footpaths needing maintenance No formal reporting of problem areas or maintenance programming	Allocate funds for upgrading and construction of footpaths Maintenance program set up and monitored. Develop a Disabled Access Plan that is regularly reviewed and updated



5.10 CULTURAL HERITAGE

Gwydir Shire's heritage is comprised of exceptional natural and cultural places which help give us a unique identity. Such places are a living and accessible record of our evolving landscapes and experiences.

Natural and cultural heritage define the critical moments in our development and reflects achievements, joys and sorrows in our lives. It also encompasses those places that reveal the richness of the Shire's extraordinarily diverse heritage.

The concept of "cultural heritage" can not only embody the concept of "ethnic heritage" but should also offer a subtle and desirable shift in focus towards the sociological factors uniting a community with less emphasis on physical, racial characteristics.

To understand the importance of Cultural heritage to the Gwydir Shire it is important to understand the history of our area and how the richness of this history has become the basis for the cultural heritage of the Shire today.

The Gwydir Shire area was originally populated by the Weraeria tribe of the Kamilaroi Nation and there are several known aboriginal sites in the region such as carved trees, bora grounds, rock art and open campsites that are protected under the National Parks and Wildlife Act.

In 1827, explorer/botanist Allan Cunningham travelled from Sydney and camped on the junction of Halls Creek and the Gwydir River which he named after his benefactor "Lord Gwydir of Wales" the then Deputy Great Chamberlain of England.

Following this expedition, squatters travelled north and took up parcels of land and developed communities and associations with the indigenous inhabitants of the area. While relationships were good in the beginning 1838 saw the Slaughterhouse Creek massacre where some 200 aborigines were slain. The Myall Creek massacre was also important as the events that followed showed the changed attitude of the "establishment" towards the indigenous people as it was the first time that white men were tried and executed for the murder of aboriginal people.

In 1840 a police post was set up at "Warialda" which means "place of wild honey", the title given to the area by the local Aboriginal people. It was a well known crossing place so a logical choice for an out post. The New South Wales Government established administration centres in the interior of the country to administer the activities of pastoralists (squatters) and Warialda was one of the sites chosen.

In 1847 Warialda became the administrative headquarters for the Gwydir squatting district and the permanent headquarters for the Assistant Commissioner of Crown Lands. It became the administrative centre and focal point of the region because so much official and legal business had to be transacted there. On December 22 1846, it was listed as a place where Courts of Petty Sessions were held. Warialda was Gazetted as a village in 1849 with Bingara being officially recognised as a village in 1852.

A number of historic buildings remain a part of the Gwydir Shire landscape and they provide a glimpse into the history of the towns and district. The discovery of gold in 1853 brought prospectors to the area and when copper and diamonds were discovered in the 1880's, rapid development followed. Bingara was the largest supplier of diamonds in Australia during this time.

The Gwydir Shire is rich in both Aboriginal and European history and the Council is dedicated to maintaining the cultural significance of all factors which have led to the development of the Shire as it is today.

“Council is committed to acknowledging and promoting arts and cultural development for the communities within the Shire in a way that will preserve its cultural environment and heritage.

Cultural development impact and cultural issues will be considered in land use, development, environment, economic and tourism planning. The economic and social benefits of cultural activities and cultural assets will be recognised and encouraged.”

The items identified in the Gwydir Shire Council Heritage Inventory Database will become part of the Local Environmental Plan following extensive consultation with the affected property owners. There will be the development of provisions for heritage and environmental significance guidelines within the Local Environmental Plan. There may be a future Development Control Plan dealing with heritage, conservation and townscape.

Gwydir Shire Council is looking to become the leader in heritage conservation work on Council property. This sets the example for other community members to follow. At present, Council is to be congratulated on its present conservation policies and practices in protecting community facilities and existing heritage items.



Warialda Courthouse

Facilities	Target	Gaps	Recommendations
<p>Identified Sites Of Cultural Significance</p> <p>Cranky Rock</p> <p>The Roxy Theatre</p> <p>Council Chambers in Bingara and Warialda</p> <p>Old Brick works in Warialda</p> <p>Gwydir River</p> <p>Myall Creek Memorial</p> <p>Slaughterhouse Creek rock art, Gravesend.</p> <p>Upper Bingara Chinese Cemetery</p> <p>Carinda House Warialda</p>	<p>All</p>	<p>Some buildings have poor access and/or poor signage regarding cultural significance</p> <p>Community is unaware of the importance of heritage in the future development of the Shire.</p> <p>Community pride in and understanding of cultural heritage is low.</p> <p>Education regarding the significance of cultural heritage and the importance of understanding how this impacts on our Shire today.</p>	<p>Implement the Shire wide Heritage study</p> <p>Develop a conservation focus that celebrates the Shire's history</p> <p>Promote heritage conservation that enhances the Shire's identity and social, economic and environmental sustainability. Continue support for Local Historical Societies.</p> <p>Develop conservation and tourism partnerships at all levels, interpretation and signage plans and cultural mapping projects and websites</p> <p>Maintenance and development of strong, relevant and inclusive values, standards and practices and continuous learning culture implanted within a Shire cultural map, cultural map website and interpretation</p> <p>Increase the community's awareness of heritage and historical development of the region</p> <p>Increase the individual's sense of place</p> <p>Promote further local and family history research in partnership with the Historical Societies across the Shire.</p> <p>Provide the opportunity to approach educational and training organisations from primary, secondary and adult education to use the historical information as a basis for the development of historical resource kits</p> <p>Provide employment and educational opportunities and skill development by the restoration of individual heritage items</p> <p>Develop a closer relationship between tourism, heritage and community economic development in partnership with the Gwydir Learning Region, in particular the outdoor guiding and recreational fishing courses offered could incorporate knowledge of culturally significant sites within the shire.</p>



Cranky Rock



Warialda Council Chambers



War Memorial



Roxy Theatre



Pioneer Grave Site



Carinda House



Myall Creek Memorial



The Home of the Mayor

6. REFERENCES

Australian Bureau of Statistics: **2001 Regional Profile Bingara, Yallaroi and Barraba Local Government Area**

Australian Bureau of Statistics: **2001 Census Basic Community Profile (2001)**

Bingara Shire Council: **Social Plan 2002-2005 (2002)**

Department of Local Government: **Draft Social/Community Planning and Reporting Guidelines and Manual (2001)**

Department of Employment and Workplace Relations: **Small Area Labour Markets Australia (2001)**

Department of Local Government: **Local Government Act**

RTA: **Moree Plains and Gwydir Shires Road Safety Strategic Plan (2006)**

Elton Consulting: **Gwydir Shire Council Department of Planning Sustainability Profile Draft Report (2006)**

Gwydir Shire Council: **Parks & Playgrounds Report (2006)**

Bingara and District Vision 20/20: **Draft Report (2006)**

de Greenlaw Consultancy: **Draft Community Strategic Plan, Gwydir Shire Council Gravesend Alive Program Crooble Program, Grow Croppa Creek Program, Cultivate Coolatai Program, Warialda Works Program (2005)**

Gwydir Shire Council **Gwydir Learning Region Strategic Plan (2005)**

Gwydir Shire Council **Community Based Heritage Study (2006)**



**GWYDIR SHIRE
COMMUNITY
DIRECTORY**

2007

Schools

Bingara Central School
Finch St,
Bingara NSW 2404
67241606

bingaracentral.school@det.nsw.edu.au

Croppa Creek Public School
Apsley Crs Croppa Crk
2411
67 545 215
67545213

Croppacrk-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au

Gravesend Public School
Gwydir St
Gravesend 2401
67 297 159
67297064

Susan.m.hardy@det.nsw.edu.au

North Star Public School
Edward St
North Star 2408
0746763128
0746 763269

northstar-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au

St Josephs Catholic School
Stewart Ave
Warialda
67 291 328
67291704

Stjo_war@arm.catholic.edu.au

Warialda Primary School
Hope St Warialda 2402
67 291 131
67291190

warialda-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au
www.warialda-p.schools.nsw.edu.au

Warialda High School
Apollo Ave
Warialda
67 291 000
67291760

Warialda-h.admin@det.nsw.edu.au

Yetman Public School
Warialda St
0746 753150

0746 753102

steve.wilkinson@det.nsw.edu.au

Preschools

Bingara Preschool
Maitland Street,
Bingara 2404
67241105

Bingara Toy Library
Maitland Street
Bingara
67240133

Warialda Toy Library
Hope Street
Warialda
67291

Tharawonga Mobile Preschool
Yallaroi Hall, North Star
PO Box 21
North Star 2408
0746763 235

Gwydir Pre-School
Services Croppa Creek
PO Box 48
Moree 2400
0267 525270

Warialda
Pre-school Association
Outreach at Gravesend
35 Queen St
Warialda
67291081

TAFE

Evans St Inverell 2360
67 219 000
PO Box 383
Inverell 2360
67 210 299
67 225 641

Allied Health

Inverell CHC
Swanbrook Rd
PO Box 701
Inverell 2360
6728 8411
6728 8380

Aboriginal Health Service
Armidale
67525 268

ACAT – Aged Care Assessment Team
PO Box 243
Narrabri 2390
67 995 102
67 995 112
wlatham@doh.health.nsw.gov.au

Agricultural Health Unit
PO Box 256 Moree 2400
67 528 210
67 526 639
dpayne@doh.health.nsw.gov.au

Bingara Medical Centre
General Practitioners, visiting specialists,
optometrist, physiotherapist
67241900
Better Health Outcomes Program –
Clinical Psychology program
Barwon Division of General Practice
And University of New England

Moree CHC
67 573 670
67 573 693
agaffaney@doh.health.nsw.gov.au

Child & Family Health Service
Warialda CHC
67 291 166
67 291 841

Day Therapy Centre Program
McLean RV
Killean St Inverell 2360
6722 2655
6722 2025
suef@mcleanvillage.com.au

Dietician
Moree CHC
67 573 669

Healthy Lifestyles Program
Bingara CHC

Incontinence Assistance
Di Nielson
Narrabri CHC
67 995 100

Northern Respite Assist
PO Box 83
Dean St
Tamworth 2340
67 661 574
1800059059
67 922 338
0429328828
67 612 187
ckeith@doh.health.nsw.gov.au

IPTAAS Isolated Patient Travel
Assistance & Accommodation Scheme
HNEAHS
PO Box 83
Tamworth 2340
67 663 946
67 664 576
cbettesworth@doh.health.nsw.gov.au

Speech Pathology
Warialda Health Service
67 291 166

Allied Health cont.....

PANOC (Physical abuse and neglect of Children)

Counsellor

Referrals through DoCS

Moree CHC

6757 3633

PADP Physical Aides for Disabled People

Moree

Tamworth

Armidale

67 573 630

67 683 294

67 764 615

67 573 697

67 661 017

67 764 900

Warialda Medical Centre

22 Hope St

Warialda 2402

67 291 520

67 291 841

warmedcn@northnet.com.au

Commonwealth Carer Respite Centre

8 Doyle St Narrabri 2390

6792 2338

0429 328828

1800 059059

6792 5781

Barwon Division of General Practice

Dietician

Moree

67527196

67527397

edobinson@barwondgp.org.au

Government Departments

Dept. of Community Services

New England Network Office

PO Box 383

Inverell 2360

PO Box 367

13 Auburn

Moree 2400

PO Box 423

Armidale 2350

Lyn.sheather@community.nsw.gov.au

Pamela.Brunner@community.nsw.gov.au

Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service

PO Box 1266

161 Balo St Moree 2400

67 572 400

67 572 422

marcia.baguley@crsrehab.gov.au

Dept. of Aging, Disability & Home Care

PO Box 383

Inverell 2360

67 210 299

67 225 641

Office of the Public Guardian

9265 3184

Dept. of Education

P.O. Box 207

Moree 2400

67 573 000

67 521 733

67 573 043

Dept. of Housing

17 Byron St Inverell

67 222 711

67 225 744

harold.white@housing.nsw.gov.au

Government Departments Cont....

Dept. of Juvenile Justice
49 East St
Glen Innes 2370
67 324 489

Dept. of Sport & Recreation
155 Marius St
PO Box 532
Tamworth
67 661 200
67 667 459
gayryan@dsr.nsw.gov.au

Centrelink Agency Bingara
24 Maitland St, Bingara
67242064

Centrelink Agency Warialda
38 Hope St Warialda (CTC building)
6729 1911

Police
67241144 - Bingara
67291144 - Warialda
67291744 - Gravesend
67529499 - Moree

Commonwealth Dept. of Education,
Science & Training – Education
Assistance for Indigenous Students
PO Box 238
Moree 2400
67 573 900

Probation & Parole Services
127 Otho St
PO Box 555
Inverell 2360
6721 0309
6722 5890

Gwydir Shire Council Services

Gwydir Shire Council
33 Maitland St, Bingara
Locked Bag 5, Bingara 2404
67 242000
54 Hope St, Warialda
67293000

Bingara Neighbourhood Centre
24 Maitland St Bingara 2404
67242071

Gwydir Youth Service
24 Maitland St
Bingara 2404
67 242071
0427241931

Early Intervention Family Worker
24 Maitland St
Bingara 2404
67 242074
0428 241 333

Naroo Hostel
Warialda
67291314
naroo@northnet.com.au
HACC
Warialda
Hope Street
Warialda 2402
Ph: 67291889 Mobile: 0428 430172
warhacc@northnet.com.au

Bingara HACC
38A Maitland Street
Bingara NSW 2404
Ph: (02) 67 241948 Fax: (02) 67241777
Mobile 0429003919
Email: bingarahacc@northnet.com.au
Open Monday- Friday.
Provides social and support services
including assistance with transport &
meals on wheels

Non-Government Organisations

Anglicare Counselling Service
PO Box 766
Inverell 2361
6722 2766

Lifeline
PO Box 373
Tamworth 2340
67 656 172
131 114

Rape Crisis Centre
PO Box 555
Drummoyne 2407
1800 424 017

Salvation Army
PO Box 143 Moree 2400
67 521 687
67 521 687
denisewebb@salvationarmy

Armidale & District Youth Support
Service
PO Box 1052
Armidale 2350
67 726 557
67 715 004
refuge@northnet.com.au

Cooper & Smith Optometrist
Balo St Moree 2400
Warialda Newsagency
67 521 753
67 525 378

Byamee Homeless Persons Support
Team
294 Warialda St Moree 2400
67 521 550
67 527 766
byamee@mpx.com.au

Country Care Link
Sydney
1800 806160 or 83826430
Family info & support for country people

Inverell Family & Youth Support Service
74 Campbell St
PO Box 990
Inverell 2360
6722 4351
67224099
ifyss@northnet.com.au

Family Day Care- Inverell
30-34 Campbell St
PO Box 807 Inverell 2360
67 225 590
67 224 038
cassie@ids.net.au

HACC Yetman
0746753226
HACC – Moree Respite Centre
Meals on Wheels
Gwydir Community Transport
305 Edward St Moree 2400
67 521 153
67 528 288
67 522 161
67 526 296
MoreeHacc@bigpond.com
mow@northnet.com.au
gct@northnet.com.au

Seniors Information Service – DADHC
13 12 44
9286 3878
Sis1@bigpond.com

Non-Government Organisations Cont....

Advocacy Northwest
Suite 2
1st Floor
422-426 Peel St
Tamworth
6766 4588
6766 4261
citizen@turboweb.net.au

McLean Retirement Village
PO Box 360
Killean St
Inverell 2360
67 222 655
67 222 025
debbiem@mcleanvillage.com.au

Moree Family Support Inc.
P.O. Box 1492
Moree 2400
67 524 536
67 525 132
morfss@northnet.com.au

Moree Family Day Care
3295 Gosport St
P.O.Box 1014
Moree 2400
67 521 214
67 521 838
moreefamilyday@bigpond.com.au

Northwest Rural Counselling Service
1st Floor Wesley Crt,
Cnr Frome & Heber Sts
PO Box 527
Moree 2400

PO Box 882
Inverell 2360
67 523 561
67 210 030
67 523 249
67 210 960
morrccs@northnet.com.au
nercs@northnet.com.au

Tamworth Youth Care
PO Box 336
Armidale Rd
Tamworth 2340
67 663 811
67 669 399
tamworthyouthcare@iprimus.com.au

Touriandi Lodge, Borah Rd
Bingara 2404
67 241 999
67 241 069
Residential and respite care for aged

SOS Private Nursing Service
67 549 302
Northcott Society
112 Carthage
St Tamworth
2340
67 665 755
6766 3505
tamworthfs@northcott.com.au

Royal Far West
Children's Scheme
P.O.Box 52
Manly 1655
8966 8500
9977 7134

Non-Government Organisations Cont....

North West In Home Care
PO Box 691
Narrabri 2390
67 924022
0428 225 003
merrilie@newtrain.com.au

Inverell Disabilities Services
Manager
'Sinclair Place' Moore St Inverell
67225548
67215166
idrsginc@northnet.com.au

SCAN Coordinator –IDS
'Sinclair Place' Moore St Inverell
67225548
0427 558890
67215166
scannewengland@northnet.com.au

Early Childhood Intervention Service
86 Henderson St
Inverell 2360
67 225962
67 225962
inverellei@northnet.com.au

Reconnect
REFS
90 Otho St
Inverell
67 324354
1300889900
refsnewengland@northnet.com.au

Spastic Centre
McLeod Centre
189 Allambie Rd
Allambie Heights 2100
94519022
94510248
pgarcia@tscnsw.org.au

Moree Women's Refuge
Ngala House
PO Box 799
Moree 2400
67 523 944
67 527311
mwrnh@northnet.com.au

CTC
PO Box 241
Warialda
6729 1911
6729 1492
manager@warialdactc.org.au

Marie Ward Counselling
45 Lang St
Inverell 2360
6722 5345
0438 794638

Mitchell Counselling
"Leyland"
North Star
0746 763186

Evans St Surgery
Counselling
46 Evans St
Inverell 2360
6722 2855

Community Contacts

Diabetes Interest Group
14 Plunkett St.
Warialda
67 291 293

SES Emergency Phone: 132500

Catholic Priest
Presbytery
PO Box 23, Geddes St
Warialda
67 291 116

St Vincent de Paul Society
37 Geddes St Warialda
67 291 359
67 291 359

Warialda Anglican Church
PO Box 98, Warialda
67291501
67291501

Anglican Church North Star
0746 762102
Anglican Church Youth Worker
67 294 177

Rocky Dam Coolatai
Red Cross
Coolootai Station
Coolatai 2402
67 299 039
67 299 039

Bingara CWA
BINGARA NSW 2404
(02) 67241653

County of Burnett CWA
Ph: (02) 295050

Croppa Creek CWA
Ph: (02) 67545358

Myall Creek CWA
Ph: (02) 67240160

North Star CWA
Ph: (07)46763266

Warialda Pastoral and Agricultural
Committee
P.O.Box 76
Warialda 2402
67 295 752

Bingara Show Society
67241799

Far West Fundraiser
15 Yaggarty St
Gravesend
67 297 140

Transport Options

Transit Lounge - Tamworth
Community Centre
HACC Initiative
Darling Street
Tamworth
6766 4480
6766 9866

M & G Travel
67 523 055

Moree Coach and Travel
67 573 711

Wadwells Coaches
P.O.Box 164
Moree 2400
67 524 677

Countrylink
132232

Media & Promotion Avenues

The Coolatai Bush Telegraph
'Glen Orton'
Coolatai
6729 9059
6729 9059
humecreek@bigpond.com

The Warialda Standard
Doug Wilson
67291460

Bingara Advocate
Nancy Capel
67241127

Projects and Programs

New England Resource & Support
Program
Armidale & District Family Day Care
PO Box 951 Armidale
6772 5300
0413 185497
6771 3202
nersp@optusnet.com.au

Early Childhood Intervention
Coordination Program
DADHC
DET
Health
Early Childhood Intervention Info Line
1300656 865

Rural Women's Network
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Gaetane.burkolter@agric.nsw.gov.au
Allison.windus@agric.nsw.gov.au